Beyond Medieval Europe

THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF SCANDINAVIA IN THE VIKING ERA

RELIGIOUS CHANGE IN ADAM OF BREMEN'S HISTORICAL WORK

by
LUKAS G. GRZYBOWSKI

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Northern Europe showing the Baltic Sea in the east and North Sea in the west and key settlements.

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INTRODUCTION

THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF Scandinavia in the High Middle Ages is a central event in the historical experience of the societies living in northern Europe. It marked an important step in the integration of the Scandinavian territories into the dynamics of European history. Since the beginning of modern historiography, in the nineteenth century, the study of this phenomenon has been the subject of many studies. When dealing with the written evidence of what has sometimes been called the process of conversion but which we call the Christianization process, historians traditionally separated the sources into two major groups: those Scandinavian in origin, and those composed by "outsiders," who observed or commented from a distance. Since both types of source tend to present narratives from quite different perspectives, modern historiography has also varied its interpretation of the historical experience according to the credibility attributed to the sources analyzed. Consequently, the Christianization process in northern Europe has given birth to many different narratives—both medieval and modern—concerning how it happened, most of which conflict with each other. Medieval chroniclers, Scandinavian saga writers, runestone carvers, modern antiquarians, historians, archaeologists, linguists: all have presented their different views on when and how Christianity was introduced and became dominant in northern Europe. Therefore, to some degree, modern interpretations have varied depending on whether their selected sources confirmed or opposed current tendencies and historiographical agendas. One of these sources is the *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum* of Adam of Bremen, with which this book deals.

The *Gesta Hammaburgensis* is a historical narrative of the deeds of the archbishops of Hamburg–Bremen in the Early and High Middle Ages. It was composed by Adam, a *magister scholarum*, that is, an intellectual linked to the diocese of Hamburg–Bremen, in the middle of the eleventh century. Adam's account is divided into four books, each of which deals with different epochs and circumstances regarding the archdiocese's past and present. In the first book, the scholar narrates the events leading to the foundation of the diocese under the missionary bishop Ansgar, up to the episcopacy of Unni, who resumed missionary activity in Scandinavia at the beginning of the tenth century. The second book presents the deeds of the archbishops during the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries. Alongside the theme of the Christianization of the Scandinavians, Adam of Bremen emphasizes the growing ecclesiastical structure of the diocese and the struggles to consolidate its position in the north. The third book is entirely dedicated to the pontificate of Adalbert, who brought the *magister scholarum* to Bremen and endured a very complicated rule over the diocese. The fourth and final book of the *Gesta* is known as the *descriptio insularum aquilonis*—the description of the isles of the north. It stands out when compared with the previous sections of Adam's work and its meaning has been highly debated among scholars. Most historians recognize it as ethnographic in character and believe it functions as a guide to the peoples and territories under Hamburg–Bremen's ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The theme of *legatio gentium*, that

is, the right and duty to Christianize pagans, in this case in northern Europe, connects all parts of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* and is considered its *Leitmotif*.[1]

In contrast with our knowledge of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, its themes, transmission, and reception both in the Middle Ages and in later periods, there is little known about its author, Adam of Bremen. Like so many medieval chroniclers, Adam gives his readers almost no clue to his identity. He does not sign his work. In the dedicatory letter to Liemar, which functions as the prologue to the historical narrative, he calls himself "A. the least of the canons of the holy Church at Bremen."[2] His name appears only about a century later when Helmold of Bosau refers to the author of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* as "*magister* Adam."[3] The *Gesta*'s author was a stranger in Bremen, as he himself points out in the prologue, saying he is also a proselyte, who arrived in the diocese during the episcopacy of Adalbert, sometime between 1066 and 1067.[4] Soon after arriving in Bremen, Adam became a *magister scholarum*, a master of the cathedral school, which is attested in a charter from the year 1069.[5] Whether he was called by Adalbert specifically for this function or assumed the position by merit after coming to Bremen is uncertain, as are other activities he might have performed during his life in the diocese. His acquaintance with King Sven Estridsen of Denmark suggests, however, that at least once Adam might have acted as a diplomatic representative in the Danish court.[6] Adam probably died before 1085, considering his apparently unfinished revision of the *Gesta*. The day of his death is given in the *Dypticon Bremensis*, a necrology from the thirteenth century, which mentions *magister Adam* on the twelfth of October.[7]

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1 For more information on the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* see the introduction to Schmeidler's Monumenta Germaniae Historica [hereafter "MGH"] edition (Bernhard Schmeidler, "Einleitung," in Adam of Bremen, *Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Schmeidler [hereafter "Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler," denoting the page of the edition and the book and chapter of the original work]) and also the introduction to Francis Tschan's translation of the *Gesta* (Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg–Bremen*, ed. Tschan [hereafter "Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan," denoting the page of the translation]). See also Schmeidler, *Hamburg–Bremen und Nordost-Europa*; and Kristensen, *Studien zur Adam*. Full references to all works cited in a shortened form are found in the bibliography at the end of this work.

2 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 3. "A. minimus sanctae Bremensis ecclesiae canonicus" from Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 1 (Prol.). While Schmeidler's edition following the manuscripts gives the abbreviation "A.", Tschan's translation presents "Adam". Since Tschan's decision to insert Adam's name in the translation is not based on the editions or manuscripts, I have chosen to follow Schmeidler's edition.

3 "[…] magister Adam, qui gesta Hammemburgensis ecclesiae pontificum disertissimo sermone conscripsit." Helmold of Bosau, ed. Schmeidler, 30 (bk. I, ch. 14).

4 Cf. "proselitus et advena" in Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 1 (Prol.); and "Emergentibus itaque multis archiepiscopo angustiis mansit opus inperfectum ad annum pontificii XXIIII, cum et ego indignissimus ecclesiae Dei matricularius Bremam veni." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 146 (bk. III, ch. 4).

5 "Adam magister scolarum scripsi & subscripsi" "CI," in *Hamburgisches Urkundenbuch: Erster Band*, ed. Johann M. Lappenberg (Hamburg: Perthes, Besser, & Mauke, 1842), 97.

6 About this see, for instance, "Einleitung" in Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, liii.

7 Mooyer, "Diptychon Bremense," 304.

Adam of Bremen is considered by contemporary historiography to be one of the most important chroniclers of the Christianization of northern Europe in the Early and High Middle Ages.[8] Certainly, his writings constitute the main source of information from the eleventh century concerning this historical process. His historiographical narrative was established early on as an important authority on the history and customs of the northern regions of the European continent, mostly identified with Scandinavia, even though he also covers the Slavic territories bordering the Baltic Sea from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, especially with regard to religious issues (as Helmold of Bosau attests in his *Chronica Slavorum*).[9] This early reception of Adam's work had a crucial influence on its interpretation by later scholars. Indeed, the echoes of various historical approaches to the *Gesta* can still be heard in modern historiography, especially in studies dedicated to religious history. Concomitantly, twentieth-century historiography made the analysis of the chronicler's intentions and the meaning of his own historiography a central theme in the hope that, by identifying Adam of Bremen's aims, his narrative, in many aspects thematically very complex and somewhat contradictory, would be better understood.

8 As asserted by different historians dealing with this work. According to David Fraesdorff (*Der barbarische Norden*, 30), Adam is the best source for investigating the Christianization of Scandinavia in the Middle Ages: "Die beste Quelle für die Christianisierung des ‚Nordens' bis zum hohen Mittelalter ist und bleibt unbestritten die Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte des Adam von Bremen." Rudolf Buchner ("Die politische Vorstellungswelt," 15) considers that the *Gesta* counts among the most informative sources of the eleventh century: "Zu den aufschlußreichsten Geschichtsquellen des 11. Jahrhunderts gehört Adams Historia Hammaburgensis ecclesiae." Thies Jarecki (*Die Vorstellungen*, 13) praises Adam almost exaggeratedly, stating that his study deals with a famous author, certainly the most acclaimed disciple of Clio and composer of a remarkable work: "Diese Arbeit setzt sich mit einem prominenten Geschichtsschreiber des elften Jahrhunderts aus theologischer und kirchengeschichtlicher Perspektive auseinander. […] Der » wohl […] berufenste Jünger Klios im Mittelalter« wird zu Recht für sein »bemerkenswertes Werk« gelobt." Aage Trommer ("Komposition und Tendenz," 207) recognizes Adam's importance in the history of not only Denmark, but the whole of northern Europe: "Adam von Bremens Darstellung der Geschichte hamburgischer Erzbischöfe ist eine der wichtigsten Quellen zur Beleuchtung und zum Verständnis nicht nur der ältesten Vergangenheit Dänemarks, sondern auch des gesammten Nordens." Ildar Garipzanov ("Christianity and Paganism," 13) acknowledges the importance of Adam's historiographical narrative and notes the large number of researchers dealing with it when discussing different themes related to medieval Germania or to Scandinavia: "The *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg–Bremen* is a historical narrative written by Adam of Bremen, the *magister* of the cathedral school, in *c*. 1072–76. The text consisting of four books is well-known to students of Ottonian and early Salian Germany and Viking Age and early medieval Scandinavia, and a great number of German and Scandinavian historians have discussed various aspects of this text and the evidence that it provides." Hans-Werner Goetz ("Geschichtsschreibung und Recht," 191) states that the *Gesta* is nothing less than a monument to the history of the diocese of Hamburg–Bremen, and Adam is the historian par excellence of the Hanseatic territory in the period before the formalization of the league: "Adam von Bremen, nach eigenen Worten ein Fremder im Norden, hat mit seiner »Ge-schichte der Bischöfe der Hamburgischen Kirche« den Bremer Erzbischöfen gleichwohl ein Denkmal gesetzt, das ihn selbst zu dem Chronisten des Hanseraums in vorhansischer Zeit macht und seinem Bistum in inniger Anteilnahme verbunden zeigt."

9 "Adam, […] qui cum commemoret Slavaniam in duo de XX pagos dispertitam, affirmat absque tres omnes ad Christi fidem conversos." Helmold of Bosau, ed. Schmeidler, 30 (bk. I, ch. 14).

This in turn would resolve at least some of the many tensions created by the account. This, for example, constitutes the pivotal point in the analyses by, to cite only the best known, Bernhard Schmeidler, Aage Trommer, Anne Kristensen, Henrik Janson, Volker Scior, David Fraesdorff, and Thies Jarecki.[10]

Although these studies have analyzed the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* from different perspectives, there is a connecting theme to almost all of them: the question of whether Adam's writings can be trusted as a source of information regarding the Christianization of Scandinavia in the High Middle Ages. Historians like Trommer, Janson, or Rudolf Buchner were especially concerned with establishing whether or not Adam of Bremen's narrative corresponds to the reality of past experiences in northern Europe, and to what degree he "distorted" or "adjusted" the objective events to present a narrative that conformed to his worldviews. For Buchner, for example, these adjustments in the narrative originated in Adam's *wir-Gefühl*—sense of belonging—which led Adam to emphasize the success of Christianization over the northern territories and its connections to the *legatio gentium*. In turn, the *legatio gentium* is presented as exclusively attached to Hamburg–Bremen and its archbishops, which therefore justifies Adam's choices. According to Buchner, this is visible in the *Gesta* through the employment of expressions such as "we" and "ours."[11]

Similarly, Aage Trommer investigated the belief structures underlying the composition of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. According to him, the chronicler exhibits clear attitudes in his historical account, especially as regards the political deeds of the Hamburg archbishops.[12] Trommer maintains that Adam expressed his anxieties about the archdiocese and displays such tensions in the presentation of his sympathies and antipathies, notably in his treatment of Adalbert's pontificate. Like Buchner, Trommer also identifies the *legatio gentium* as the pivotal element around which the chronicler develops his arguments. Both scholars were concerned with the reliability of the historical narrative presented in the *Gesta* and aimed to purge Adam's account of its "bias." Through the identification of such elements in the narrative, they sought to eliminate, or at least minimize, what they saw as the negative impact of many of the positions he adopted. Trommer believed that only by taking this approach could the valuable historical information conveyed by Adam in his historiographical project be truly recognized: "Adam and his book are undoubtedly far more complicated than has often been assumed. It seems clear that only after a critical study, such as the one I propose, has been made, only then can conclusions be drawn from this text regarding the historical reality, which is first and foremost a primary source."[13] Through propositions like these, it becomes clear that

10 Namely Schmeidler, *Hamburg–Bremen und Nordost-Europa*; Trommer, "Komposition und Tendenz"; Kristensen, *Studien zur Adam*; Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*; David Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*; Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*.

11 According to Buchner's summary in "Die politische Vorstellungswelt," 51.

12 This contrasts with the earlier position of historians like Georg Dehio, in his *Geschichte des Erzbistums Hamburg–Bremen*, who believed Adam was an objective chronicler and his narrative was very balanced.

13 "Adam und sein Buch sind unzweifelhaft weit komplizierter als oft angenommen wurde. Und

many studies are still primarily oriented towards a notion of history inspired by Ranke's early-nineteenth-century dictum: the search for the past as it *really* happened.[14]

This search for a past *reality* amidst the many "distortions" Adam of Bremen introduced into the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* is not limited to the older or traditional historiography, but can also be found in more recent analyses, such as the works by Henrik Janson and Anders Winroth. This is evident in Janson's discussion of Adam's description of the temple in old Uppsala for example, in which he concludes that the chronicler is not describing a real place.[15] Anders Winroth, in turn, refers to Adam's interference in the information he transmits, calling it his agenda and seeing this agenda as generating an intentional distortion of the historical account. According to Winroth, "[t]he narrative sources each push their own agenda. Adam wants the conversion to be a result of German intervention the better to defend the rights of his own (German) church in Bremen over Christianity in Scandinavia."[16] The adherence of all these authors—both in recent and in older historiography—to the notion of a past *reality* points to the construction of historical narratives from a factual perspective and sets the limits of their studies. Although a factual approach to history should of course not be entirely dismissed—as some recent historiographical critiques have attempted to do—it is not the sole way of understanding past experiences. Complementary perspectives are provided by analyzing the past at a structural level, and by regarding its conceptual expressions. In my study of Adam's work, I follow a conceptual analysis from an anthropological perspective.

Studies by David Fraesdorff, Volker Scior, Hans-Werner Goetz, and, to some degree, Thies Jarecki have also adopted this perspective. However, none of these authors has undertaken a systematic analysis of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* as a whole. Rather, they have looked at specific elements of Adam's historical narrative in support of their analysis at a broader level. Scior, for instance, has investigated the construction of identity categories in the continental historical discourse of the High Middle Ages, following the increasing contact with Scandinavians and Slavs brought about by the expansion of west European power. For Scior, the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* is representative of an important stage in the construction of the "otherness" of the Scandinavian peoples. Similarly, Fraesdorff analyzed the notion of being "barbaric" that medieval historiography attached to Scandinavian populations. His study also pointed to Adam of Bremen's use of identity categories in his account.[17] When compared with those earlier studies

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es steht jedenfalls fest, dass man erst nach der Durchführung eines solchen kritischen Studiums Schlussfolgerungen von diesem Text, der in weitem Umfange primär ist, auf die geschichtliche Wirklichkeit ziehen darf." Trommer, "Komposition und Tendenz," 257.

14 As in the famous statement by Leopold von Ranke (*Geschichten der Romanischen und Germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1535* (Leipzig: Reimer, 1824), v–vi) that "Man hat der Historie das Amt, die Vergangenheit zu richten, die Mitwelt zum Nutzen zukünftiger Jahre zu belehren, beygemessen: so hoher Aemter unterwindet sich gegenwärtiger Versuch nicht: er will bloß sagen, wie es eigentlich gewesen."

15 Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*, 327ff.

16 Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia*, 114–15.

17 Cf. Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde* and Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*.

by Buchner, Trommer, and Winroth, an interesting shift in perspective can be identified. Although still concerned with Adam's "bias," Scior and Fraesdorff no longer seek to purge the *Gesta* in search of a past reality, but engage with the chronicler's particular views as a way of discovering how he saw and interpreted his own world. Yet, neither Scior nor Fraesdorff have fully addressed the central concept of the *legatio gentium* in Adam's work, that is, the Christianization of the north. This is the task I attempt to accomplish in the present book.

Hans-Werner Goetz has recently published two studies in which Adam of Bremen's historical narrative is addressed from a conceptual perspective. In one of these, Goetz looks into paganism as part of a larger investigation of the perception of religious otherness by medieval authors. In an earlier work, Goetz presented an analysis of Adam's distinctive construction of the past. In this, Goetz also offers a summary of his reflections on the method he calls *Vorstellungsgeschichte*, an attempt to analyze the realm of ideas and concepts from an anthropological point of view. The analysis I present in this book is inspired by these theoretical and methodological propositions.[18]

Vorstellungsgeschichte: Approaching Ideas and Concepts from an Anthropological Perspective

Vorstellungsgeschichte—a theoretical and methodological approach to ideas—is closely attached to the study of historiography from the Middle Ages. From a modern perspective, one fundamental question when dealing with this kind of source material is how it relates to a "real" past, that is, how close these narratives are to a notion of objective temporal experience, and, therefore, how much they "distort" reality in favour of a narrative that harmonizes with the author's medieval belief systems. This distinction between narrative and reality has indeed been a central issue in theoretical discussions over the past decades. The "linguistic turn" from the last quarter of the twentieth century evidenced this inherent distinction. As a result, history-writing from the past has been increasingly approached as a testimony of the period in which it was written rather than as an information vehicle for themes described in its narrative. This means that the source material does not just reveal to modern historians the content it presents, but also subjectively informs researchers about how these elements were interpreted at the time the text was composed. Consequently, there is a "gap" or a "discrepancy" between the epoch in which the medieval historian can be located and that which is the

18 Goetz's best-known work to the English-speaking public is probably *Life in the Middle Ages: From the Seventh to the Thirteenth Century* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993). As a successful textbook author in Germany, Goetz is considered one of the most influential medievalists from German academia. In my investigation, however, I am especially interested in Goetz's theoretical contributions to establishing a methodological framework for the analysis of concepts from an anthropological perspective: Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen* and Goetz, "Constructing the Past." I follow especially Goetz's lengthy treatment of this topic in the introduction to his *Gott und die Welt: Religiöse Vorstellungen des frühen und hohen Mittelalters. Teil I, Band 1: Das Gottesbild*, Orbis mediaevalis. Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters 13.1 (Berlin: Akademie, 2011).

subject of his or her writing. This gap can be considered "conceptual" or "intellectual" in nature. By investigating the ideas involved in the composition of a given historical narrative, *Vorstellungsgeschichte* seeks to call attention to the conceptual singularities of this source and, therefore, to promote a better understanding of its intentions.

Although there might be some confusion at the level of communication, especially due to the interchangeable application of the nouns *history* and *past* when referring to these experiences, a narrative is clearly different from the experience itself. This is also true of medieval accounts, and as we can see from the distinction between *res gestae* and *narratio rerum gestarum*, it was recognized at the time too. Thus, the *res gestae* was seen as being identical to past experience, whereas "the *narratio rerum gestarum*, is a (controlled and reflected) 'construction'; writing history means 'constructing the past', although no medieval chronicler would have noticed or admitted such a characterisation."[19] Therefore, we can say that a specific construction originates from its chronicler's reflection on temporal experience, and is, therefore, linked to his or her intellectual context. The worldviews and conceptual limitations of a given author and time are determining elements in the composition process. As a result, the historian must pay close attention to these features in order to get closer to the messages and meanings intended by the author of a particular source. However, modern historians cannot restrict themselves to identifying bias within the source, but also need to take into account the conceptual context as a whole. Ideas are always linked to the time in which they are expressed and constitute an important record regarding human thought.

This is not a new insight for modern historiography and the study of ideas from the past has been an important field since the beginning of the discipline's professionalization in the nineteenth century. However, initially, most studies involved a factually oriented approach to medieval thinking, centring analysis almost exclusively on pinning down the ideas of theologians and philosophers. This was certainly consistent with general views on history and its functions as held by nineteenth-century society. But as historical thinking changed, so too did approaches to the study of ideas in the past. In this sense, a major contribution was certainly made by the French *Annales* movement. In particular, Marc Bloch started to analyze ideas and thinking with an emphasis on their social aspects and using a serial approach to the past, thus introducing the notion of *mentalité*. However, the *Annales* movement was especially interested in collective expressions of thought and ideas, and the individual was either ignored or considered as no more than one expression of a bigger picture. In this setting, there was little space to study an individual's ideas as his or her unique expressions whilst simultaneously avoiding a return to the earlier paradigm of "great minds." It soon became clear that this was an important gap that needed to be addressed and advances in anthropology offered the necessary tools to do so.

This is the main focus of my own investigation, and *Vorstellungsgeschichte*—as an anthropologically oriented study of historical ideas—presents the means for such

19 Goetz, "Constructing the Past," 18.

an enterprise. This German term can be roughly translated as "History of Concepts,"[20] and is directed towards a third tier of human temporal experience, that is, to mental expressions of human apprehension of temporal existence. It differs, therefore, from the search for a factual or structural past in that it looks into how an individual's ideas and worldviews formed their interactions with the environment of which they were a part. In other words, this research seeks to know the past through its representations: the ideas that emerge from reality. The central question that guides the investigation thus abandons any pretension to reconstructing the past from a factual perspective ("what actually happened") or a structural perspective ("what processes are involved in a given event, its motives and conditions"), asking instead "how did the individuals involved in a particular event or process perceive, signify and transmit their impressions, ideas and opinions about what they witnessed or believed they had witnessed."[21]

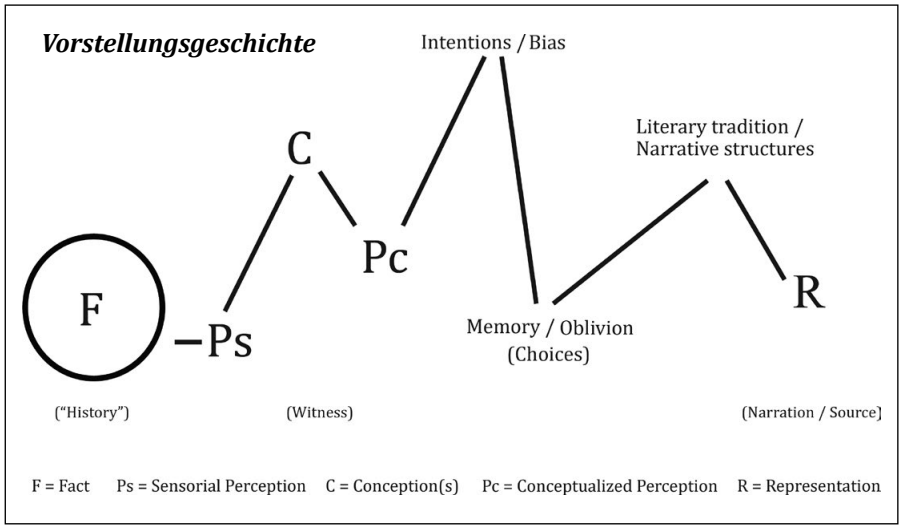
Vorstellungsgeschichte can be understood as an attempt to recover the individual in the context of ideas, but without falling back on investigating only the thoughts of "great people" (although it does not exclude them). It seeks to expand the study of ideas to all spheres of human experience, in that it gives special attention to a typical person as a witness of historical processes. In other words, what is of interest here is knowing how the individuals of a given age—whether direct or indirect participants of the historical process, active or passive—interpreted their own reality and how they transmitted this knowledge of the real. As I see it, when dealing with medieval thought in this sense, medieval historiography becomes a particularly fertile medium for study.

Looking at how a narrative about a historical event (or structure) is formed is also a good way to understand the propositions of *Vorstellungsgeschichte*. As mentioned above, there is a clear distinction between the *res gestae* and the *narration rerum gestarum*. The diagram below (Figure 1) makes this clear.[22] When something happens in the past (F), this is perceived by a witness (Ps) through their senses. This means that someone sees or hears about it, or reads something, then takes that up as a fact that deserves to be transmitted further. This first moment of perception occurs through the senses (it is visual, auditory, tactile, etc.), but is not conscious. There is no meaning in sensory perception and it is thus immediately transformed into conscious perception (Pc). Between these steps, there are concepts (or conceptions) (C), which act as interpreters for, and catalogue the elements perceived through, the senses, and thus give significance to the otherwise perceptible but meaningless stimulus of the event. This conscious perception is then further shaped by the author's bias or their intentions; by the choices the witness (or author) makes, which can be oriented by these intentions/bias, or the result of the

20 The term as well as the theoretical framework of the proposal is close to that of *Begriffsgeschichte*, which has been translated as the "History of Concepts." However, *Begriffsgeschichte* is mainly interested in concepts from a linguistic perspective, while *Vorstellungsgeschichte* deals with concepts as the expression of the entire intellectual universe of the author, which can be traced linguistically, but which are also subjectively present in his texts in other ways.

21 As in Goetz, "Vorstellungsgeschichte."

22 Here I follow the explanation and the visual schematics presented in Goetz, "Constructing the Past," 18–20.



natural interplay of memory and forgetfulness (which, in turn, can also be the result of more complex psychological elements such as trauma or desire). All this determines what will become present in the testimony or narrative about the event (F). The final product of this process is the *narratio*, or representation (R), which for its part is oriented by, or must conform to, literary or narrative structures common to the period in which the narrative is composed.

Therefore, when dealing with history-writing from the past, the modern historian is actually bound to work with a given construction regarding the event that is necessarily different from the fact itself, not only due to the intrinsic difficulties involved in the observation of facts—no one can be omniscient—but also due to the fact that the narrative is attached to the complex processes described above. When today's historiography emphasizes the role played by perceptions in the construction of the representations of historical experiences, it must be referring to conscious perception (Pc), because sensory perception cannot adequately be translated into a verbal expression without the resource of concepts. If we consider that the concepts (and/or conceptions) actually orient the perception which is transmitted through the narrative, then it is only logical that these conceptions should be of interest to the historical study.

The approach I follow in my study of Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis* is, therefore, not primarily concerned with the facts which are narrated in the chronicler's account, but with *the narrative as a fact*: how and why, or to what end and by what means, it was constructed. This does not mean or imply, however, that the narrative, even if it might be different from the facts it narrates—and as I have argued, it *is* necessarily different—is false, or pure fiction.[23] It is, rather, an interpretation of reality bound

23 According to Goetz, "Although all historiography is a construction of the past, it is nevertheless far from being fictitious, […] historiography is not fiction because it does not produce a completely arbitrary construction, but is based on certain principles and is bound to a certain view, or image,

to the conceptual categories available to the composer of the narrative. Here we should remind ourselves that we too are bound to our concepts and conceptions when interpreting the world, and the time-lapse that separates us from the subject of the study must also be accounted for. Rather than assuming that people in other periods did *not* understand the world, it is more productive to argue that they did understand it, but *differently*. This difference has prompted many accusations that medieval sources might not be reliable when narrating past events or experiences. However, such accusations bear within themselves an anachronistic element: they measure the sources by modern standards—which not only follow other intentions but can also resort to a whole new raft of intellectual and technological tools, whose impact on the very notion of truth and reliability cannot be denied. On the other hand, when approaching these sources as (conceptual) witnesses of the period in which they were composed, modern investigators can identify new insights into the sources and their authors. Instead of a "distortion" caused by an "agenda"—that is, a conscious falsification of facts—the sources are to be considered as "constructions" of a specific type, under which lie different conceptual and intellectual worldviews and interests. These are the premises on which is based my study of Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis*.

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This book is divided into four chapters, the first of which is the longest and deals with Adam of Bremen's ideas regarding the religious landscape of northern Europe in the period that precedes its Christianization. This first chapter is itself divided into three parts, dealing in turn with, respectively, paganism among the Saxons, the Slavs, and the Scandinavians. The second chapter explores Adam's views on the origins of the Christianization process. This topic is central to understanding the general concept of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* since it constituted one of the chronicler's main arguments in favour of the archbishopric's primacy over the northern territories. In the third chapter, I look into Adam's idea of the *legatio gentium* as an ongoing enterprise related to the universal course of history, specifically into how Adam applies this notion to justify Hamburg–Bremen's claims over the territories of the *legatio* at a time when most of it was already Christian or was experiencing an increased Christian presence. In this chapter, I also discuss Anglo-Saxon influence on the Christianization of Scandinavia, and how this is dealt with by the *magister*. Finally, in the fourth chapter, I discuss two elements connected to the chronicler's subjectivity which nonetheless inform his readers about his conceptual framework[24] and, therefore, about the significance of his historical narrative, namely, ethics and the issue of identities. These are examples and by no means

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of the past (Geschichtsbild): first, it is bound to a historical object, the res gestae, and to time, or chronology." Goetz, "Constructing the Past," 20–21.

24 It has been suggested that "attitudes of belief" would better express the elements I aim to discuss in this book. However, although I feel it might be *as adequate as* "concepts," the term could be misread as connected both to a purely active and a non-rational entity. While this might appear in some positions taken by the author, the idea of "concepts" seems to be a better choice. Besides encompassing the active and the non-rational, it also refers to the rational and the passive, as well as the intellectual environment and worldviews of an epoch.

exhaust the possibilities for analysis, but they do clearly show the potential of such a reading of the *Gesta*. At the end of the book, a short conclusion recapitulates and structures the main elements of the preceding discussions.

I have based my analysis on Bernhard Schmeidler's edition of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, published by the Monumenta Germaniae Historica. The English quotations presented in this book, however, are from Francis Tschan's reliable translation, except where explicitly mentioned otherwise.

Chapter 1

BEFORE CHRISTIANIZATION

WHEN WE THINK or, in this case, read about the Christianization process in Scandinavia, we are almost automatically reminded that such a process could only happen if the Scandinavians were not Christians in the first place. This might seem self-evident. However, I believe it to be very important to stress it here because Adam of Bremen also does so in his account of the history of the archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen. For him, the Scandinavians that became Christian were those who abandoned their previous beliefs and cult practices and adopted the new—for Adam, the only true—belief in the Christian God and the new practices presented and conducted by the Christian Church through their priests and missionaries. As I shall discuss later, for Adam this also means the subordination of these new Scandinavian Christians to the authority of a specific ecclesiastical organization, with the archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen at its head. Adam is thus concerned mainly with this process as it relates to already Christianized Scandinavians, that is, the Danes, Norwegians, and some of the Swedes, and he defends the need to expand these successes to other Scandinavian communities around the northern frontiers of Christianity. It should be remembered, too, that the north, in Adam's views, also included some of the Slav communities living beyond the Elbe River.[1] According to his account, after Charlemagne founded the city and established its first bishop, "[t]his same church at Hamburg he designed to establish as the metropolitan see for all the Slavic and Danish peoples."[2] Adam adds, however, that these plans of Charlemagne's were never realized owing to his "cares of the realm,"[3] and because after his death, "[f]orgetful of his father's wishes, Louis commended the Transalbingian province to the bishops of Bremen and Verden."[4] These events are important if we are to understand some of Adam's claims concerning the diocese of Hamburg–Bremen and its right to spread the Christian religion in those regions. What seems to be even more important for Adam, though, is the right of the archdiocese to exert ecclesiastical power

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1 On the issue of Adam's views on the North and his understanding of Hamburg's claimed territories, see Thomas Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität*; Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*; Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*; and Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*.

2 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 19. "disponens eandem Hammaburgensem ecclesiam cunctis Sclavorum Danorumque gentibus metropolem statuere." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 18–19 (bk. I, ch. 14).

3 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 19. "In qua re ad perfectum ducenda et mors Heridagi presbyteri et occupatio regni Karolum imperatorem, ne desiderata compleret, impediit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 19 (bk. I, ch. 14).

4 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 20. "Ludewicus voluntatem patris oblitus provinciam Transalbianam Bremensi et Ferdensi episcopis commendavit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 20 (bk. I, ch. 15).

and influence over the newly Christianized territories. According to Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide, "[t]he establishment of Christianity by the turn of the second millennium AD is also key to understanding multiple processes of the time."[5] This means that an adequate understanding of a whole group of past experiences and historical processes depends on the correct interpretation of Christianization in a broader sense, which I believe is also Adam's own aim in his historical writing.

For Adam, the groups that had been converted—or still needed to be—were easily classified according to their religious practices and beliefs:[6] they were all pagans (*pagani* or *gentiles*) who sacrificed (*sarificia* or *libationes*) to gods (false ones, or demons according to the *magister scholarum*)[7] and believed in all sorts of superstition and idolatry.[8] This image has long been present in modern views about the Scandinavian past during the Middle Ages and it can still be witnessed in art and entertainment media,[9] just as it is also the centre of extensive debate in academic circles.[10] Therefore, whenever "Scandinavian paganism" is mentioned, it evokes a deep-rooted cluster of concepts regarding ritual, belief, and mythology. By contrast, "Slavic" or "Saxon" paganism seems to be more or less limited to discussions in an academic context, being less appealing to popular consumption and thus less prone to the intermingling of scientific information on the one hand and romanticizing artistic and philosophical projections on the other.

But what is paganism? Answering this question is both easy and complicated. From a Christian point of view it is easy, since to Christianity all are pagans (*gentiles*) except those who are either Christians or Jews.[11] But it is also complicated because there is no clear definition either of what paganism is or who pagans are; there is no clearly outlined set of characteristics. According to Ian Wood, due to the variety inside the belief systems presented as pagan the term is completely inadequate: "To speak of paganism, therefore, is to speak of a whole raft of religious issues, each of which called forth dif-

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5 Nordeide, *The Viking Age as a Period of Religious Transformation*, vii.

6 Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen*. Against this position, see Patzold, "Wahrnehmen und Wissen."

7 On the issue of pagan gods as demons, see Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*, 264: "Die Bedeutung des Nordens als Region des Teufels schließlich ist im Fortgang dieser Untersuchung bereits mehrfach betont worden."

8 For example, "Adams Beschreibung der Schweden ist ganz stark vom 'heidnischen Irrglauben' geprägt." Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*, 255. See also Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 117ff.

9 Most recently on the series *Vikings*, broadcast first by the television channel History and then by Netflix from 2013. As Anders Winroth recently stated (*The Age of the Vikings*, 184), "Still, the stories we have [from Scandinavian mythology] continue to exert a strong pull on us with all their fascinating and mysterious detail."

10 For an overview of the long-lasting debate, see Haki Antonsson, "The Conversion and Christianization of Scandinavia: A Critical Review of Recent Scholarly Writings," in *Conversion and Identity in the Viking Age*, ed. Ildar Garipzanov and Rosalind Bonté, Medieval Identities 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 5. For a good overview of earlier scholarship, see Nordeide, *The Viking Age as a Period of Religious Transformation*.

11 Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen*, 31–32: „Heiden" sind in der christlichen Vorstellung zunachst (unterschiedslos) alle Nichtchristen (mit Ausnahme der Juden)."

ferent responses from the Christians."[12] Indeed, looking into modern scholarly works dealing with paganism in the medieval west, definitions of paganism are rare. One such attempt is found in Przemysław Urbańczyk's contribution to Martin Carver's *The Cross Goes North*. Urbańczyk's comparative approach aims to set out the main differences between the Christian and pagan worldviews and especially the political functions of both religions. The characteristics of paganism that he delineates though are rather general and fail to create a clear distinction between Christianity and paganism. So, although Urbańczyk seeks to identify a clear opposition between pagan and Christian at the end of the first millennium, I doubt this could be verified except superficially for these religious phenomena.[13] Adam of Bremen's narrative of Archbishop Adalbert's superstitions, for example, show that such a clear distinction between Christian and pagan practices might be no more than a rhetorical element in political disputes.[14] According to Aleksander Pluskowski and Philippa Patrick, although there have been some attempts to delineate Christian and pagan belief systems, "there is too much apparent variation in both religious systems and gaps in our existing knowledge, especially regarding European paganism, to suggest such clear polarity."[15] This difficulty in establishing a clear definition of paganism is only further complicated by the fact that the concept only existed from a Christian perspective, which aimed at creating a Christian identity rather than promoting knowledge of the religious other.[16]

In this chapter, I will address some of these issues. However, instead of following a more traditional approach and attempting to discover "how it really was"[17]—in accordance with the "Rankean" dictum, and testing Adam's views against our current knowledge of the Scandinavian religious landscape—I will seek to understand which conceptions (using the meaning established in the book's introduction) framed his presentation of northern practices, and why. In other words, I investigate and discuss why Adam of Bremen decided to write his description of Saxon, Slavic, and Scandinavian paganism the way he did, how this reflected and affected his views and the views of his readership, and what the consequences are for modern scholarship. There are certainly many possible ways of interpreting the religious themes and narratives in Adam's work, and just as certainly, I am neither rejecting them all nor even claiming which best expresses

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12 Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 5–6.

13 Przemysław Urbańczyk, "The Politics of Conversion." While Urbańczyk points out that there is no clear distinction between Christian and pagan practices regarding politics in the Early Middle Ages (p. 16), he believes that a clear opposition can be identified by the end of the first millennium (p. 26). Although I cannot deny the many changes in the religious and political landscape of medieval Europe during this time, I rather believe the shift is related more to Christian rhetoric than to a structural solidifying of such an opposition.

14 See my analysis of this matter below in chapter 4.

15 Pluskowski and Patrick, "How Do You Pray to God?," 30.

16 As James Palmer presents it (see the discussion on p. 20 below). Guy Halsall discusses the employment of similar categories of otherness when dealing with the definition of "barbarian" in Roman sources (see below p. 17n42). More recently, Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen*.

17 Compare with Ranke's position, see p. 7n14 above .

his intentions and views.[18] On the contrary, my intention is to bring forward some of my own reflections on the areas which, as far as can be ascertained in such a complex and broad field of study, have still not been sufficiently addressed.

Adam presents his ideas concerning pre-Christian religious beliefs and practices quite early in the *Gesta*, and this may attest to its importance for him. Although most historians tend to give special attention to Adam's description of the pagan temple and ritual in (Old) Uppsala, it is in his depiction of Saxon paganism, which he borrows from Tacitus's *Germania*, as quoted in the *Translatio S. Alexandrii* by Rudolf of Fulda,[19] that we first find the fundamental elements that will characterize his whole treatment of the non-Christian religious cultures of the north. This is significant, and it seems, thus, that an investigation of Adam's use and incorporation of this depiction of the Saxons is a good starting point for understanding his ideas about northern paganism. We will see that these descriptions have a big impact on Adam's wider views on the non-Christian religious practices he describes. Indeed, it becomes virtually impossible to correctly understand and interpret Adam's view concerning northern paganism whilst disregarding his ideas on Saxony and Slavic culture, as well as his more general views on theology and the philosophy of history.

Paganism in Saxony

The Saxon *gens* constitutes a central category of identification in the *Gesta*. Adam begins his first book with a lengthy description of Saxony and the Saxons, which itself points to the importance of the Saxon territory and population in Adam's conceptions. Moreover, both the region and its people, especially their political leadership, are frequently presented as a self-inclusive category in Adam's historical writing, to which the narrator and reader belong: he repeatedly refers to Saxony as "ours," and to the Saxon political leaders as "our leaders."[20] Adam places Saxony in a prominent position in his historical work and dedicates the first eleven chapters of his initial book to a description of the

18 For example, Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia*, identifies Adam's view of northern paganism as part of an agenda. Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*, sees in Adam's handling of the Scandinavian religions the marks of his overall dualistic presentation of history. Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, and Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität*, note Adam's identity constructions; and Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*, identifies in Adam's text rhetorical strategies to achieve political objectives.

19 Adam believes the text he quotes was actually written by Einhard and calls it *Gesta* or *Bella Saxonum*. Cf. Trillmich, "Einleitung," in Trillmich and Buchner, *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts*, 147. Adam's source can be found in Rudolf of Fulda and Meginhart, "Translatio Sancti Alexandrii," in *Scriptores rerum Sangallensium*, ed. Pertz, 675–76.

20 According to Volker Scior (*Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 78), "zum einen stellt der Chronist seinem Werk mehrere Kapitel voran, in denen er ausführlich über die *Saxonia* und ihre Bewohner berichtet, und auch sonst kommt er häufig auf 'Sachsen' zu sprechen, während andere Regionen kaum in seinen Blickpunkt geraten. Zum anderen bildet die *Saxonia* unter den weltlichen Gemeinschaften am häufigsten das Objekt von Wir-Bezügen: Dreimal verwendet Adam den Ausdruck *nostra Saxonia*, die sächsischen (Billunger) Herzöge bezeichnet er als *duces nostri*, und nach Meinung der Forschung nennt er gar 'die Sachsen' *nostri*."

territories, peoples, and cultures, as well as the recent history of the land, concentrating on the conquest and Christianization process led by Charlemagne at the end of the eighth century. This corresponds to roughly one-fifth of the first book in the modern edition by Schmeidler, which is a significant proportion of the whole.

Adam opens his first chapter declaring that "[s]ince Hamburg was once the noblest city of the Saxons, we think it neither unsuitable nor profitless, in setting out to write the history of the Church at Hamburg, to state first what the most learned man Einhard and other well-known authors left in their writings about the Saxon people and the nature of its country."[21] When reading this, however, the modern historian ought to be suspicious of the references to both Saxony and Hamburg, not to mention the interplay between them.

This subject has been much discussed, especially among German scholars from the end of the twentieth century onwards, who have revised much of the earlier—also German—historiography on the issue. The abovementioned works by Volker Scior, David Fraesdorff, and Thomas Foerster can be located within the broader discussions of identities in the medieval past that have been a fruitful part of scholarship over recent decades. The issue of a Saxon identity, that is, an identity based on ethnic characteristics and an attached sense of belonging, is dealt with in particular detail by Scior. He identifies in Adam's work a noteworthy attachment to the regions around Hamburg and Bremen. Against the position of Rudolf Buchner, who in the 1960s defended a *Reichpatriotismus*[22] in Adam's historical writings, and of Wolfgang Eggert, who revised Buchner's ideas in the 1980s and proposed a stronger identification of Adam with *Saxonia* and the *Saxones*, Scior recognizes in the *Gesta* a multilayered structure of identification. Apparent in both secular and religious themes, this plays out as a greater identification by Adam with his direct communities around Bremen and Hamburg, and the surrounding diocese.[23] Adam does express his attachment to the duchy, the kingdom, and the empire but, in Scior's opinion, the closer the territory is to the centre of power in his diocese, the stronger the connection he displays.[24] Consequently, Adam writes his work from a very

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21 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 6. "Historiam Hammaburgensis ecclesiae scripturi, quoniam Hammaburg nobilissima quondam Saxonum civitas erat, non indecens aut vacuum fore putamus, si prius de gente Saxonum et natura eiusdem provintiae ponemus ea, quae doctissimus vir Einhardus aliique non obscuri auctores reliquerunt in scriptis suis." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 4 (bk. I, ch. 1).

22 As in "so spricht daraus nichts als sein Gefühl für Ehre, für den Vorteil des Reiches – ein echter 'Reichspatriotismus', wie wie diese Empfindung am ehesten werden benennen können." Buchner, "Die politische Vorstellungswelt," 37.

23 As we can see in Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 86–87: "Die Untersuchung der Selbstzuschreibungen des Chronisten hat ergeben, daß diese sehr komplex und vielschichtig sind. Denn Adam schreibt sich gleich mehreren Gemeinschaften, sowohl aus dem ‚kirchlichen', als auch aus dem ‚weltlichen' Bereich zu. […] Der quantitative Befund ist eindeutig: Adam schreibt sich stärker den kleineren Gemeinschaften zu als den größeren."

24 Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 86: "Somit kommt im Hinblick auf den ‚weltlichen' Bereich den Selbstzuschreibungen Adams dieser recht kleinen Region eine wesentlich größere Bedeutung zu als etwa der Saxonia und, noch deutlicher, als regnum und Imperium. Vor allem auf den Bereich,

specific point of view. Far from being neutral in the face of the subjects covered in his historiography, and despite his clear efforts to sustain his narrative as truthful by pointing to its sources, Adam is particularly conscious of his duty to help "a mother spent of strength."[25] Indeed, he declares his subjectivity while rejecting his critics, announcing that he wrote his history "to please not everybody but you,[26] father, and your church. To please the envious is very difficult."[27] Any approach to Adam's work should, therefore, bear this in mind.

Adam's awareness regarding his role as the writer of the diocese's history is further displayed in his choice to deal with the Saxon theme right at the beginning of his work, in the first chapters of the *Gesta*. As stated above, he pointed to the authority of earlier writings to give support to his own analyses and interpretations regarding the Saxon past. Adam understands the importance of his role as historian and the impact that a composition properly supported by authoritative arguments could have on the successful pursuit of his goals. As a result, in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* we find an author very concerned with the details in his historical narrative and, as a consequence, we should see Adam's treatment of Saxon history not simply as the backstory to the foundation of Bremen and Hamburg, but also as carrying a broader significance. As I'll try to demonstrate, his narrative choice relates not only to the history of Hamburg and Bremen from a factual and pragmatic point of view, but also in a more abstract manner, which is more directly connected to the philosophical infrastructure on which Adam creates his narrative and which therefore connects all four books of his *Gesta*.

In the first two chapters, Adam gives a geographical description of the land inhabited by the Saxons. Already in the first sentence he acknowledges Einhard as his main source of information, but in composing his account he is also inspired by Orosius and other Roman writers. In addition, Adam offers many pieces of information which seem to be based on his own experience: he corrects the data presented by Einhard (by drawing on a description inspired by Orosius's histories), and complains about the lack of sweet wine.[28] It thus becomes clear that Adam of Bremen is not simply a compiler of information, but shows an interest in the analysis and interpretation of his material, giving a determined sense of history to his narrative.[29]

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welcher von der erzbischöflichen Herrschaft zur Abfassungszeit erfaßt wird, richtet sich demnach auch eine 'regionale Identität'."

25 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 3. "exhaustam viribus matrem potuerim iuvare." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 1 (Prol.).

26 Archbishop Liemar, to whom he addresses the Prologue of his *Gesta*.

27 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 4. "Nobis propositum est non omnibus placere, sed tibi, pater, et ecclesiae tuae. Difficillimum est a enim invidis placere." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 3 (Prol.).

28 After presenting Einhard's description stating that "Saxony is no small portion of Germany", he intervenes, affirming that "Rightly surveyed, Saxony appears to be triangular in shape." Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 6. Later, Adam writes that the Saxon territory "sola caret vini dulcedine; alia omnia fert usui necessaria." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 5 (bk. I, ch. 1). That this is a complaint by Adam is an idea discussed by Goetz, "Geschichtsschreibung und Recht," 193n12.

29 And if we are to agree with Aage Trommer and later historians about the central role of

Following the description of Saxon territories, in the third chapter Adam introduces the origins of the Saxon people, based on a reading of Orosius and Gregory of Tours. This chapter precedes an extensive quotation from Rudolf of Fulda's *Translatio sancti Alexandrii*,[30] which Adam calls the *Gesta Saxonum* and believes was written by Einhard. It is in this quote[31] that we encounter the first description of pagan religiosity in Adam's narrative. Thus, quoting the *Gesta Saxonum*, Adam starts by informing the reader that "in the interest of upright morals [the pagans] strove to have many useful and, according to the natural law, honourable regulations, which could be very helpful to them in meriting true happiness if they were not ignorant of their Creator and strangers to the truth of His worship."[32] Even though this is a direct quotation from the *Gesta Saxonum*, we can clearly identify Adam's own interest in the missionary theme expressed in this passage. It is not by chance or through lack of other sources that he drew on this work.[33]

Adam seems here to imply a central theme to his concept of Christianization. That the passage was quoted from the *Gesta Saxonum* does not mean it does not represent Adam's own views, especially considering his double reference to Einhard as his source,[34] once at the beginning and then again at the end of the extended quotation. I believe he thus intends not only to reaffirm the authority of the text he is quoting from, but to point to his conscious choice of, and his agreement with, the *Gesta Saxonum*'s position. The closing comment to the extensive quotation enlightens us further as to why Adam willingly inserted it in his own historical account. Although not surprising at all in medieval historiography, such a statement from Adam—pointing to the necessity of Christian salvation even for peoples he concedes possess upright moral standards and

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missionary activities and the Christianization of the north in Adam's concept (see this book's introduction), then we should expect his treatment of the pre-Conversion practices of Christianized peoples to function in accordance with this concept in his historical narrative. Adam's discussion of paganism should not be seen as a simple by-product of his subject. Trommer writes, for example ("Komposition und Tendenz," 218), that "Nach diesem Nachweis der zentralen Stellung der Sendung innerhalb der Behandlung."

30 See note 19 above. I consciously keep Adam's mistaken attribution and primarily use "*Gesta Saxonum*" to identify the work from which he takes his quotations. An alternative would be to double it as "*Gesta–Translatio*", but this would again imply that I might be trying to purge Adam's work of its mistakes, which I do not intend to do.

31 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 7–9 (bk. I, ch. 4–7).

32 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 10. "Et multa utilia atque secundum legem naturae honesta in morum probitate studuerunt habere; quae eis ad veram beatitudinem promerendam proficere potuissent, si ignorantiam creatoris sui non haberent et a veritate culturae illius non essent alieni." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 8 (bk. I, ch. 6).

33 On the sources Adam used in his *Gesta*, both explicitly quoted or as indirect inspiration, see Trillmich, "Einleitung," in *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts*, 147–50; and Schmeidler, "Einleitung" in Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, lvii–lxv.

34 At the end of the third chapter, Adam writes "quod breviter conscribens Einhardus tali modo suam ingreditur Historiam." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 6 (bk. I, ch. 3). At the end of the seventh chapter, he writes "Haec tulimus excerpta ex scriptis Einhardi de adventu, moribus et supersticione Saxonum, quam adhuc Sclavi et Sueones ritu paganico servare videntur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk. I, ch. 7).

beneficial laws that facilitate happiness—reveals his worldviews. The interplay of Christian religion and the philosophical questions of morals, justice, and happiness are, thus, announced as an element of concern for Adam's historical narrative. I discuss this in detail later in the fourth chapter of this book.

Following those introductory remarks, Adam describes what he believes constituted some characteristic religious practices of the pagan Saxons. Here, again, he quotes extensively from the *Gesta Saxonum*, which itself took those descriptions from Tacitus's *Germania*. Thus Adam of Bremen presents a notion of "Germanic paganism" that reaches back to the first century CE and may, therefore, reflect a traditional, more general idea concerning the situation among the Saxons prior to their Christianization. The fact that he believes the authority of the *Gesta Saxonum* and considers its narrative regarding the Saxons to be true reinforces the notion that these ideas constituted a generally accepted *imaginaire*, part of the *mentalités* shared between the author and his readers. This assumption is supported when we consider that Adam explicitly corrected Einhard's information regarding the limits and size of the Saxon territory. His choice to then use this source without any authorial interference suggests Adam's conscious agreement with Einhard as regards the Saxons' religious and ritual practices. Consequently, hereafter I will deal with this passage as if it had originated with Adam himself, pointing to his sources only when specifically necessary.

"For they worshiped those who, by nature, were not gods. Among them they especially venerated Mercury, whom they were wont on certain days to propitiate, even with human sacrifices."[35] With these words, Adam initiates his description of Saxon paganism. There are three noteworthy elements here and they are intrinsically connected to Adam's views regarding the many forms of paganism that appear throughout his work. The first is his opening remark that the pagan gods were not gods by nature. With this statement, he points not only to Pauline theology as recorded in the epistle to the Galatians, but also to a number of patristic authors, whose polemics founded this argumentative topos. Adam indicates, therefore, his own intention to polemicize over the theme of religious practices and beliefs, something which he actually does in a number of passages later in his work, as we will see. This polemical position may also explain why Adam explicitly presents Orosius and Gregory of Tours as his sources, while not caring to inform his readership who the "other well-known authors"[36] are, or the "ancients" from whom "[w]e have learned from much reading."[37] It seems, thus, that Adam sees himself within a larger tradition of historians writing from a very specific point of view about the expansion of Christianity and its conflict with the pagan world, a tradition that can be traced back to Late Antiquity.

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35 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 10. "Coluerunt enim eos, qui natura non erant dii, inter quos precipue Mercurium venerabantur, cui certis diebus humanis quoque hostiis litare consueverant." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 8 (bk. I, ch. 7).

36 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 6; "aliique non obscuri auctores." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 4 (bk. I, ch. 1).

37 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 7; "compertum est nobis ex multa leccione veterum." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 6 (bk. I, ch. 3).

This could further explain the second noteworthy element in Adam's initial description of Saxon paganism. In quoting from the *Gesta Saxonum*, Adam decided to include Einhard's naming of one of the Saxon gods as Mercury, that is, as the equivalent to a Roman deity. This adherence to the idea of an *interpretatio romana* is unlikely to be an unthinking incorporation by Adam of a traditional interpretative category. On the contrary, he was renowned for the use of vernacular terms in his work, including many parallels between classical and vernacular forms. This was recognized even by a medieval commentator on *scholium* 151.[38] Such exercises in linguistics already appear at the beginning of the *Gesta*, for example when Adam, in the second chapter, uses the Latin expression *qui nunc* ("which now [is called]") when introducing the names of the rivers in Saxony.[39] Ignorance of the Germanic names of the Saxon deities can also be dismissed, since Adam makes use of them in other sections of his work, namely in the famous description of the Uppsala temple, as we will see. Keeping that in mind, we can conclude that the use of the "Romanized" name of the deity in this quotation was intentional and fulfilled a specific purpose. On the one hand, it serves Adam's argument that these figures were not gods, but—maybe—demons, just as the patristic tradition had established. On the other hand, Adam's wielding of the Romanized name points to his conscious use of learned categories for the description of past realities, rather than drawing on his own possible experiences or on information from witnesses of pagan practices, if any such practices still remained as has been suggested.[40]

The third element of Adam of Bremen's introduction is probably the most spectacular and presents a central theme in the medieval characterization of paganism: human sacrifice. Sacrifices assume a central role in these discussions because of their meaning both for Christianity and the pagan religions, albeit very different meanings. According to Arnold Angenendt, generally speaking, sacrifices constitute the means by which individuals or collectives negotiate with their deities. In this sense, sacrifice is an expression of a reciprocal relationship between "earthly" and "heavenly" entities that binds them together in a way expressed by the formula *do-ut-des*.[41] This implies a circular kind of relationship between the sacrificing humans and the appeased deity, since there is some expectation generated by each sacrificial act and guaranteed by the contractual obligations on each part. Interestingly enough, by emphasizing this contractual character of the sacrificial act, we are also directed to the fact that this relationship is controlled by the human, bargaining agent, in the sense that it is they who assume the initial active

38 "Hic apparet, quod scriptor huius libelli fuit ex Germania superiori, unde vocabula pleraque sive nomina propria, cum ad suam aptare voluit linguam, nobis corrupit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 270 (bk. IV, ch. 35, Schol. 151).

39 "Nobilissimi Saxoniae fluvii sunt Albis, Sala, Wisara, qui nunc Vissula vel Wirraha nuncupatur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 5 (bk. I, ch. 2).

40 As alluded to by Wood, "What Is a Mission?", and Padberg, *Die Christianisierung Europas*. For a more intense defence of the continuity of pagan practices in Saxony as forms of resistance against the imposed Carolingian conquest, see Carole Cusack, "Pagan Saxon Resistance to Charlemagne's Mission."

41 Angenendt, "Mission und Opfer," 1:67.

part in the contractual relationship. In other words, the sacrificing individual or community keeps certain control over the deity through an economy of the sacrificial act. It seems to be precisely because of this that sacrifice had a great appeal and a central role in the discourse concerning both religious and ethnic "others."[42]

Just about anything could be offered as a sacrifice in such a relationship between a given community and its deity. In fact, there is evidence that most sacrifices had a material–economic character. Goods of all sorts were brought to the deity or deities in their special place of encounter, which could be an altar, as in the Judaic, Christian, or Roman traditions, or a sacred grove, lake, or marsh, as many finds in northern Europe attest. As diverse as the sacrificed goods may have been, it seems that blood sacrifice attained a special significance early on. It was held to be the source of life and the origin of the soul strength.[43] This might explain Adam's choice of blood sacrifice as the first—very symbolic—characteristic in his description of Saxon paganism. It demonstrates the commitment of the Saxons to their deities through their willingness to offer the highest-known sacrifice to appease them. That it is a human sacrifice makes the practice even more repellently striking for the reader. It is also both futile and barbaric. Futile, because Adam writes from a Christian position for a Christian readership who believed the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth constituted the final sacrifice; and the offering of human lives to false gods can be nothing other than pure and useless barbarism.

However, "[t]he evidence of human sacrifice among the Germanic tribes is too numerous for there to be any doubt as to its existence, [attested] both in the literary sources of the Roman contemporaries of the Iron Age Germanic tribes, […] and also in archaeological finds."[44] Therefore, just because Adam makes use of such information in a very specific way, using it to reinforce the otherness of Saxon culture, it does not mean that it should be considered fictitious, or simply a literary construct. On the contrary, Adam takes information that is based on knowledge well-established since at least the Roman period. But this is updated and recalibrated to function in a narrative aimed at promoting Christianity in the north, in a context of ongoing struggle. With respect to human sacrifice among Germanic cultures, Rudolf Simek also suggests that it was an ancient tradition, with literary documents attesting its existence "from the Roman Iron Age to the Viking Age." On the other hand though, "archaeological finds after the fifth

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42 Guy Halsall concludes ("The Barbarian Invasions," 38–39) that "It is often forgotten that when Roman writers talked about barbarians, they were not engaged in a dialogue with the barbarians. It was not a case of saying 'we are like this, but you are like that', nor was Roman ethnography a simple matter of neutral reportage. The Roman idea of the barbarian was essentially a rhetorical device employed against other Romans. The barbarian, by simple virtue of not being Roman, could be deployed in any and all contexts, as an 'other', to make whatever point was at hand."

43 Angenendt, "Mission und Opfer," 1:67: "Das von Menschen Geopferte kann alles Mögliche sein, doch ist die wichtigste Gabe das Blut, das als Träger des Lebens gilt. 'Die Bedeutung des Blutes als 'Sitz des Lebens' und der Seelenkraft erklärt seine zentrale Rolle in vielen Religionen'."

44 Simek, *Religion und Mythologie*, 59: "Die Belege für Menschenopfer bei den Germanen sind zu zahlreich, als dass irgendein Zweifel an ihrer Existenz bestehen könnte, und zwar sowohl in den literarischen Quellen der römischen Zeitgenossen der eisenzeitlichen Germanen als auch in der eingangs in diesem Kapitel erwähnten Tacitusstelle und auch in den archäologischen Funden."

century can no longer be demonstrated."[45] As a result, we can conclude that human sacrifice was still a popular topic in writings discussing paganism as late as the eleventh century, even if, as far as we know, it had not actually been practised in the regions mentioned by Adam of Bremen for at least six centuries. Human sacrifice had, rather, a conceptual function. It led the readership of Adam's work to a certain set of mental images associated with pagan rituals, moral values, and cultural practices, which helped the author create a context in which he could more easily convince his readers of his points of view. Here, at the beginning of his narrative, Adam sets out to impress his audience, a characteristic found throughout his entire historical account, as I will demonstrate.

After establishing that the Saxons were pagans because of their worship of non-deities—which were well-known from ancient sources and had already been refuted by the patristic authorities—and that they used to appease these non-deities with human sacrifices, Adam enumerates a series of ritual practices that underlines the fact of their paganism. According to the *Gesta*, the Saxons did not build temples for their gods but worshipped them in groves and forests that were consecrated to these deities. They also stopped themselves from representing their gods in human form, believing this to be demeaning.[46] This description in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* agrees with other literary sources, but the archaeological evidence tends to refute it. According to Simek, the existence of wooden idols formed in human likeness and deposited at different ritual sites in northern Europe contradicts Adam's views,[47] views which can be traced back to Tacitus and may be interpreted as his attempt to stress the barbarous character of Germanic religious practices.

The same may be true concerning the temples. This topic has been long debated in discussions of Germanic paganism and its material expression, mostly because there has been no certain archaeological evidence for the existence of temples, at least compared to those of the Mediterranean cultures. The exceptions are in those regions that came into close contact with Roman culture and thus emulated it, fashioning temples in the Roman style for their Germanic deities.[48] This was interpreted, especially from the Romantic movement up to the 1960s, as evidence for the reliability of Tacitus's information, even if in other passages the Roman author himself alluded to temples among the

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45 Simek, *Religion und Mythologie*, 61: "Damit sind wenigstens vereinzelte Menschenopfer von der römischen Eisenzeit bis zur Wikingerzeit literarisch und ikonographisch belegt, während archäologische Funde nach dem 5. Jh. nicht mehr nachzuweisen sind.".

46 "Deos suos neque templis includere neque ulla humani oris specie assimilare ex magnitudine et dignitate celestium arbitrati sunt; lucos ac nemora consecrantes deorumque nominibus appellantes secretum illud sola reverentia contemplabantur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 8 (bk. I, ch. 7).

47 Simek, *Religion und Mythologie*, 101: "Derartige Pfahlgötter sind, ethnologisch gesehen, aus den verschiedensten Kulturen mit einer anthropomorphen Götterwelt belegt und sind auch bei den Germanen kein Phänomen allein der Eisenzeit oder der vorhergehenden Epochen, sondern noch so späte Funde wie der der völkerwanderungszeitlichen Holzfigur von Eskilsrud bestätigen die lange Kontinuität der Darstellung von Göttern in Form von Holzstatuen."

48 Simek, *Religion und Mythologie*, 87–97.

Germanic tribes.[49] It was when changed archaeological interpretations were put into dialogue with textual sources that our current perspective was modified. As has become ever clearer, the difficulty in identifying temples among the Germanic peoples derives from a very strict interpretation of the word's meaning in the textual sources. A less rigid approach has promoted an important bridge between history and archaeology in this respect. It now seems to be accepted that many Germanic cultures performed rituals inside enclosed spaces and solid buildings, which sites should be interpreted, at least partly, as temples, even if they served multiple purposes. Finally, new evidence seems to show even the presence of small buildings exclusively dedicated to the performance of religious rituals.[50] How these discoveries apply to the Saxons, as a smaller unit within the more general Germanic cultural pattern, is still uncertain, since these new shreds of evidence are found concentrated primarily in the territories of modern-day Scandinavia. But it is plausible to consider that there might be at least some analogous sites in Saxony, even if they have so far eluded discovery.

The central point here, however, should not be the precision or otherwise of Adam's description of Saxon religious practices, but rather that his portrayals of the Saxon past play an important role in creating and defining a conceptual context for discussing non-Christian religiosity. At this stage in his work, Adam is discussing paganism using the Saxons as a platform for his arguments, but later he expands his focus to also deal with Slavic and Scandinavian religiosities, and once again with no concern for the accuracy or even factual veracity of his account.

Adam of Bremen continues his description by pointing to different kinds of divination practised among the Saxons. He emphasizes the casting of lots, the interpretation of the singing and flight of birds, as well as the behaviour of horses.[51] Again, this passage cannot be seen as a simple insertion of traditional literary topoi concerning the religious "other," especially in the face of Adam's later employment of these elements to discuss distinct events in his narrative, some of which are not directly connected to

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49 Tacitus, *Germania*: "nec quicquam notabile in singulis, nisi quod in commune Nerthum, id est Terram matrem, colunt eamque intervenire rebus hominum, invehi populis arbitrantur. est in insula Oceani castum nemus, dicatumque in eo vehiculum, veste contectum; [...] pax et quies tunc tantum nota, tunc tantum amata, donec idem sacerdos satiatam conversatione mortalium deam templo reddat. mox vehiculum et vestis et, si credere velis, numen ipsum secreto lacu abluitur. servi ministrant, quos statim idem lacus haurit." Cited from Loeb Classical Library 35, 196–97. And Tacitus, *Annales*, bk. 1, ch. 49–51: "Caesar avidas legiones, quo latior populatio foret, quattuor in cuneos dispertit; quinquaginta milium spatium ferro flammisque pervastat. Non sexus, non aetas miserationem attulit: profana simul et sacra et celeberrimum illis gentibus templum quod Tanfanae vocabant solo aequantur." Cited from Loeb Classical Library 312.

50 As pointed by Olof Sundqvist, "An Arena for Higher Powers." Sundqvist's suggestion that the Uppsala temple might be identical to such constructions will be discussed further below. Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*, points in the same direction; Henrik Janson, "Adam of Bremen and the Conversion of Scandinavia."

51 "Auspicia et sortes quam maxime observabant. [...]. Avium voces et volatus interrogare proprium erat illius gentis. Equorum quoque presagia ac motus experiri hinnitusque ac fremitus observare." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 8 (bk. I, ch. 7).

pagan practices, at least in an objective way.[52] It is, however, important to point out that Adam is very concerned with defining such activities as examples of pagan practices or superstitions—he employs the Latin *supersticio,* which can be understood in both senses in this context—which he only includes so that his readership can understand the kind of errors to which such peoples were bound and from which they were released by Christianity.[53]

Adam's comment introduces us to a final set of overarching concepts he is employing to give meaning to his historical narrative and accompany his interpretations of the missionary activities in northern Europe envisaged in his work. Saxon paganism was an error and enslaved the Saxons. Paganism is recurrently characterized as an error, a position which can be attributed to Isidore of Seville and Bede (both authors believed that pagans were void of wisdom and discipline).[54] The Saxons' liberty was achieved by conversion to Christianity (which is a very interesting way of presenting it, since Christianization was partly the result of the Carolingian conquest, as Adam was well aware) and their submission not only to the Christian faith and ecclesiastical hierarchy, but also, we may infer, to the empire built by Charlemagne. If we accept Henrik Janson's thesis on the Uppsala temple as being correct, as I do, then we can already foresee this concept—of the connection between ecclesiastical and secular power—in Adam's treatment of the Saxon conquest by the Franks and their integration in the socio-political dynamics of the (Christian)[55] Empire. The opposition between darkness (*tenebrae*) and light (*lumina*) is also important and has been discussed extensively by Thomas Foerster,[56] who identifies a clear association of the south with light and warmth and the north with darkness and cold—geographical observations that could be understood both as theological and civilizational concepts in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. David Fraesdorff, too, discusses these issues and concentrates on the relationship between geographical characteristics and the creation of parallels with barbarism and paganism.[57]

Adam's subsequent quotation of the *Vita Karoli*, written by Einhard, returns to the equation of paganism and barbarism. "For they were, like nearly all the inhabitants of Germany, both fierce by nature and given to the worship of demons. Hostile to the true

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52 I discuss this in detail in chapter 4 of this book.

53 "Quomodo autem certis diebus, cum aut inchoatur luna aut impletur, agendis rebus auspicatissimum initium crediderint aliaque innumerabilia vanarum supersticionum genera, quibus implicati sunt, observaverint, pretereo. Haec vero ideo commemoravi, quo prudens lector agnoscat, a quantis errorum tenebris per Dei gratiam et misericordiam sint liberati, quando eos ad cognitionem sui nominis lumine verae fidei perducere dignatus est." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk. I, ch. 7).

54 According to Hans-Werner Goetz (*Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen*, 129), "Immer wieder wird Heidentum als Irrtum bezeichnet. […] Nach Isidor und Beda fehlt ihnen jede Weisheit und jede Disziplin."

55 The Christian character of the medieval Empire can be derived by the recurrent use of the formula "dei gratia" accompanying the kings' and emperors' titles in documentary sources. Nevertheless, some caution is needed when speaking of a Christian empire in the eleventh century.

56 Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität*, 34ff.

57 Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*, 261ff.

religion, they thought it no disgrace either to dishonor or to transgress the laws of God and man."[58] This seems to contradict Adam's earlier statement, that the Saxons had naturally good morals and that they may have been truly happy but for their lack of knowledge of the true God; nevertheless, it fits Adam's purpose in showing the need for the Christianization of the inhabitants of the *aquilo* (north). Even if they had good natural morals, they lacked salvation and were to be considered barbarous, uncivilized savages, if not by earthly, at least by heavenly, standards, which were those Adam intended to apply in his *narratio rerum gestarum*. And this becomes very clear when Adam declares that "[t]hese excerpts about the advent, the customs, and the superstitions of the Saxons (which superstitions the Slavs and the Swedes still appear to observe in their pagan rites) we have taken from the writings of Einhard."[59] The intent behind Adam's description of Saxon paganism is, thus, to prepare his readership for his account of the manners of the Slavs (*Sclavi*) and Swedes (*Sueones*), who in his view still practised a *ritus paganicus*.

Consequently, the readers of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* would be aware, from this point forward, that Adam is not going to differentiate or be specific when dealing with the religious practices he identifies as pagan among the Slavic and Scandinavian peoples he is describing. He is not interested in being specific because the detail has no effect on the conceptual framework of his historical narrative. On the contrary, the employment of rather schematic and stereotypical ideas concerning the "religious other" reinforces Adam's advocacy of the missionary character of the archdiocese of Hamburg–Bremen. In addition, by using these concepts in a generic manner, Adam removes himself from the dangers of being confronted with contradictory information or different experiences. He manipulates the factual realities, and so the concepts presented by the text may thus be interpreted as serving Adam's purposes, no matter their relation to external truths. Scandinavians and Slavs can be labelled pagans on the grounds that they do not integrate within the hierarchy of the Church, because they do not submit to (Christian) imperial power, because of their animal superstitions, or because of their barbarous and violent ways. By the end of his seventh chapter, Adam has delivered to his readers the core tools for evaluating and interpreting the entire set of information he presents in his narrative. And as I will show, Adam repeatedly employs those categories of religious otherness throughout.

There has long been a discussion around this aspect of medieval paganism and its presence in narrative sources by Christian authors. The stereotypical characteristics of such texts have long been highlighted by modern researchers. As Hans-Werner Goetz suggests, such stereotypical handling of the religiosities of non-Christian cultures is an

58 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 11. "Erant enim, sicut omnes fere Germaniam incolentes, et natura feroces et cultui demonum dediti veraeque religioni contrarii neque divina neque humana iura vel polluere vel transgredi inhonestum arbitrabantur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk. I, ch. 7).

59 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 11. "Haec tulimus excerpta ex scriptis Einhardi de adventu, moribus et supersticione Saxonum, quam adhuc Sclavi et Sueones ritu paganico servare videntur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk. I, ch. 7).

"expression of a firm conceptual setup."[60] In addition, even where there is some variation on the ways of presenting paganism in medieval sources, the core elements are basically static. This further supports the aforementioned idea: medieval authors were not interested in differentiation because they did not want to engage in learning about paganism, but rather in dominating it and incorporating paganism into a Christian worldview.[61] As James Palmer points out: "One thing we must be clear about from the outset is that there was no simple interaction between Christian missionaries and people who believed in some kind of 'pan-Germanic paganism'. 'Paganism' as a category is simply a Christian construct established to create a dichotomy between civilized, urban Christianity and the beliefs and practices of people in the countryside; it does not refer to a specific set of beliefs, but rather to an adherence to things which are not Christian. Moreover, the concept of 'pan-Germanic' culture is as problematic as the concept of 'Germanic'."[62] For all that, we should not fall into the trap of thinking that Christianized peoples did not practise rituals based on a set of ideas as regards the relationship between the physical and metaphysical plane.[63] By looking at Adam's treatment of Slavic and Scandinavian paganism, we will be able to recognize his particular approach to pagan religions, and thus also identify his viewpoint regarding Christian practice.

Paganism among Slavic Cultures

Most research into the paganism in Adam of Bremen's account of the history of the archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen tend to focus on his descriptions of Scandinavian practices, most prominently his description of the site and rituals in *Ubsola*. For Adam himself, however, equally as important is his coverage of his much closer neighbours, namely the Slavic populations east and northeast of Hamburg. This is recurrently emphasized in passages such as the one closing his description of Saxon paganism, in which he states that "the Slavs and the Swedes"[64] still seem to follow pagan rites. With around one hundred entries in the index of the Schmeidler edition for the lemmata *sclavania* and *sclavi* alone, there can be no doubt as to the importance of the Slavic regions and population in Adam's work.[65] However, in the scholarship this importance is often eclipsed by

60 Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen*, 135.

61 See, for example, Palmer, "Defining Paganism."

62 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World*, 114. Goetz (*Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen*, 136) concludes, however, that this is precisely "a set of beliefs." A slightly different approach is presented by Lutz von Padberg (*Die Christianisierung Europas*, 35). According to him, "[d]er Glaube der Germanen selbst ist schwer zu erfassen, und auf jeden Fall kann man nicht von 'der' germanischen Religion sprechen, sondern muss nach Stämmen und Zeiten differenzieren. Die Quellenzeugnisse [sind] erst spät und dann aus christlicher Perspektive aufgezeichnet worden."

63 Padberg, *Die Christianisierung Europas*, 34: "Die christlichen Glaubensboten drangen keineswegs in religionsfreie, säkulare Räume ein, ganz im Gegenteil."

64 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 11.

65 Opposing this stance is Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 99: "Es scheint auffällig, daß Adam weitere Merkmale wie *mores* und *ritus* nur selten im Zusammenhang mit den *Sclavi*, häufiger dagegen in den Berichten über skandinavische Völkerschaften erwähnt.".

the attention given to the works of Helmold of Bosau or Thietmar of Merseburg; only recently has more attention has been given to the *sclavi* in Adam's work. In his analysis of *Fremdzuschreibung*—the creation of categories of "otherness"—Volker Scior considers Adam's treatment of the Slavs and their territories. He concludes that a central concern of Adam's is the classification of these peoples and a charting of their relationship to the missionary activities of Hamburg and their submission to the ecclesiastical power of Adam's diocese. In Scior's words, "[t]he religious affiliation of the Slavs represents the most important evaluation criterion"[66] in Adam's historical account. If this is true, then we might expect at least some references to Slavic religious practices, especially considering the centrality of Christianity in Adam's work. Even if Adam does not apply the categories of *mores* and *ritu* to describe the *sclavi* as often as when he deals with the *dani*, *sueones*, and *nortmanni*, this should not be interpreted as a sign of Adam being uninterested in these peoples. As I will demonstrate, his choice is directly connected to his historiographical project and fits the conceptual underlining of his historical narrative.

Adam presents Slavic and Saxon paganism in a slightly different manner. In the case of the latter, Adam describes the transformation experienced by the Saxons as a historical process already concluded in the past, carried out by holy men and exemplary Christian rulers. In addition, he does not point to any specific diocese in the Frankish realm charged with carrying out the missionary project to the Saxons; it is presented rather as the saintly calling of holy men, which Adam seems to also identify as the source of the success of this enterprise. The Christianization of the Slavs, on the other hand, although also marked by the work of holy missionaries, was seen by Adam as a duty of the Church of Hamburg—later shared with Magdeburg—and as such, it was part of the essence of the diocese Adam is trying to promote in his historical narrative. As a result, Adam approaches the issue of Slavic paganism with some different concerns in mind, which are reflected in his text.

The first of these issues is Adam's concern regarding the rights of the archdiocese of Hamburg–Bremen over the Christianization of the *sclavi*. From the beginning of his work, he repeatedly informs his readership of the *legatio* of the diocese of Hamburg as relating to the Slavs as a clear declaration of the old prerogatives of the archbishops. Adam believes that Charlemagne, by founding Hamburg, designated this diocese at the northern margins of the Elbe River for the Christianization of the Danes and the Slavs as well. "Since at that time the Slavic tribes also were subjected to the rule of the Franks, Charles is said to have committed Hamburg. […] This same church at Hamburg he designed to establish as the metropolitan see for all the Slavic and Danish peoples."[67] Thus, this account presents us with interesting information regarding Adam's ideas

66 Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 102: "[D]ie Religionszugehörigkeit der Slawen stellt das wichtigste Bewertungskriterium dar."

67 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 19. "Quo tempore cum Sclavorum quoque gentes Francorum imperio subicerentur, fertur Karolus Hammaburg civitatem Nordalbingorum, extructa ibidem ecclesia, Heridago cuidam sancto viro, quem loci episcopum designavit, ad regendum commendasse. […] Disponens eandem Hammaburgensem ecclesiam cunctis Sclavorum Danorumque gentibus metropolem statuere." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 18–19 (bk. I, ch. 14).

about Christian proselytizing on the northern frontiers of the Carolingian Empire. Firstly, again, there is a need to stress the fact that, for him, the Christianization of the Slavs was a duty of the diocese as much as was the Christianization of their Scandinavian neighbours to the north. Therefore, we should expect a certain balance in the narrative concerning both regions, even if, as was suggested by Scior, in most of Adam's references to the Slavs, a marked religious opposition is absent. This somewhat different treatment of the Slavs and Scandinavians in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* may have its roots in the possible influence of Augustinian concepts. As I will show, Adam levels harsh critiques against the *sclavi* because, in his view, they relapsed back into paganism after having been Christianized and having had an established Christian community for at least several decades.

Turning back to Adam's defence of Hamburg's prerogatives relating to the Christianization of the Slavic populations, this was surely central to the conceptual framework of his historical narrative. This becomes clear when we observe the recurrence of this element in the first book of the *Gesta*. On three different occasions, Adam associates the Christianization of the Slavs with the purpose of the diocese. The previously mentioned attribution of the foundation of the church to Charlemagne is but the first of his attempts to show Hamburg's vocation as work among the Slavs. This passage clearly tries to strengthen the prerogative of Hamburg's *legatio ad gentes* by associating it with the great Carolingian emperor. This position is later confirmed in two further places.

The first is where Ansgar is appointed by Louis the Pious to assume the newly created archbishopric of Hamburg in 831, an act later confirmed by Pope Gregory IV: "In a general council of clerics which he held, the pious Caesar, […] appointed Hamburg, the city of the Transalbingians, as the metropolitan see for all the barbarous nations of the Danes, the Swedes, and likewise the Slavs and the other peoples living round about. […] Pope Gregory IV confirmed the actions by his apostolic authority and by the bestowal of the pallium."[68] The next time this theme returns to the narrative is when Adam writes about the disputes arising between the (by then) united archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen and the archbishopric of Cologne. Here, again, Adam uses the involvement of the emperor and the pope to confirm the prerogatives of not only Ansgar, but of his successors too. According to Adam: "The orthodox Caesar, Louis, at length reconciled the discordant minds of the disputants […] and laid the matter before the most holy Pope Nicholas in Rome. The latter readily gave his approval […] By virtue of his apostolic authority, therefore, he decreed that the bishopric of Bremen be joined with that of Hamburg […] This same Pope Nicholas constituted the same Ansgar, as well as his successors, legates and vicars of the Apostolic See for all the Swedish, Danish, and Slavic peoples."[69]

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68 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 23. "Habito igitur generali sacerdotum concilio pius cesar votum parentis implere cupiens Hammaburg civitatem Transalbianorum metropolem statuit omnibus barbaris nationibus Danorum. Sueonum itemque Sclavorum et aliis in circuitu coniacentibus populis […] roborante id papa Gregorio quarto apostolica auctoritate et pallei datione." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 22–23 (bk. I, ch. 16).

69 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 31. "Tandem orthodoxus cesar Ludvicus, compositis hinc inde contradicentium voluntatibus, precipue Guntharii, Coloniensis archiepiscopi, […], super his

Taken together, these passages reveal much regarding Adam's position concerning not only Hamburg's prerogatives relating to Scandinavia, but also to the Slavic territories northeast of the episcopal see. The possible forgeries by Ansgar as to the foundation of the archbishopric in the ninth century and the impact of these on our understanding of the factual reality, as identified by Eric Knibbs[70] and later fiercely contradicted by Henrik Janson,[71] are only of minor concern here. As clearly apparent in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Adam of Bremen believed these documents to be true and based his own interpretations of the past on the premise that having been valid in the ninth century, they must still be valid in the eleventh. They constituted historical evidence of the privileges claimed by the diocese of Hamburg–Bremen concerning the Christianization of the Scandinavians and Slavs.

From these three passages presented in the first book of the *Gesta*, we thus learn that Adam of Bremen was especially concerned with establishing Hamburg's singular position with regards to the Christianization of the peoples living along the northern and northeastern borders of the Carolingian Empire in the ninth century, and this included the Christianization of the Slavic groups living at the Baltic shores, close to the Hamburg see. These peoples were still following religious patterns and practising rituals that were interpreted as paganism at the time Adam composed his work, as he states while writing about the Saxons and their cults. In this sense, they were still a focus for the direct action and interference of the diocese, as much as were the Swedes (although the Swedes have received more scholarly attention). Unlike the Swedes, however, there were other elements that influenced Adam's account and judgement of the relations between Hamburg and the Slavic populations, as becomes apparent from later passages in the *Gesta*.

The violent confrontations between Saxons and Slavs are clearly a central theme in Adam of Bremen's account and they undoubtedly weigh on the author's different treatment of Slavs and Swedes in his work. On the one hand, the Slavs appear as a constant menace to the Church in Hamburg and should, therefore, not only be Christianized, but also subdued by imperial power, just as Charlemagne had done. This is evident, for example, when Adam writes that "[i]n those days Saxony was overwhelmed by a most frightful persecution, as from one direction the Danes and Slavs, from the other the Bohemians and Hungarians wrought havoc with the churches. At that time the diocese of Hamburg was laid waste by an attack of the Slavs, and that of Bremen by an attack of the Hungarians."[72] The destruction of the *parrochia Hammaburgensis* by Slavs is cer-

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Romam direxit ad sanctissimum papam Nikolaum. Ille, […], facile consensit. Ergo Bremensem ac Hammaburgensem episcopatum auctoritate apostolica copulari […] In quibus etiam additum est, quod idem papa Nykolaus tam ipsum Ansgarium quam successores eius legatos et vicarios apostolicae sedis constituit in omnibus gentibus Sueonum, Danorum atque Sclavorum; quod et antea Gregorius papa concessit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 32–33 (bk. I, ch. 27).

70 Knibbs, *Ansgar, Rimbert*.

71 Janson, "Ansgar und die frühe Geschichte."

72 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 47. "In diebus illis inmanissima persecutio Saxoniam oppressit, cum hinc Dani et Sclavi, inde Behemi et Ungri laniarent ecclesias. Tunc parrochia Hammaburgensis

tainly a very sensitive element in Adam's account of the Slavic population in connection to the missionary activities of his diocese. Significantly, preceding this description of the devastation wrought over the Hamburg Church, Adam writes that despite the internal turmoil among the Danes and the incursions of barbarians—as Adam identifies them—Ansgar's work in the Danish territory was not disrupted. Adam seems, thus, to feel a special resentment toward the Slavic populations under the Hamburg jurisdiction.

Further, Adam also affirms more than once that the Slavs were Christianized early on, but relapsed back into pagan practices, which thus made them apostates and, therefore—if we assume that Adam holds a strict Augustinian view concerning the interaction between Christians and followers of other religious practices—deserving of extermination rather than Christianization. In this case, the reason for Adam's relatively minor interest in the religious practices of the Slavs might be because he was more intent on violent confrontation and the eradication of the apostates. This is, however, highly hypothetical and an objective analysis of Adam's text does not furnish us with sufficient evidence either way.

The idea of the military subjugation of the Slavs as a parallel effort to their Christianization can be identified in many passages of the *Gesta*. Shortly after describing the destruction of the *parrochia Hammaburgensis* by the Slavs, Adam writes that the Saxon king Henry impressed the Slavic population in such a manner that they willingly promised to start following the Christian faith. In Adam's words: "King Henry, who feared God even from his boyhood and placed all trust in His mercy, triumphed over the Hungarians in many and mighty battles. Likewise he struck down the Bohemians and the Sorbs, who had been subdued by other kings, and the other Slavic peoples, with such force in one great encounter that the rest—and just a few were left—of their own accord promised the king that they would pay tribute, and God that they would be Christians."[73] There may be some parallels in this account with that of Charlemagne promoting the Christianization of the Saxons through their conquest and dispersal. Adam seems to be pointing in such a direction when associating Henry's military prowess with the Slav's decision to follow the Christian faith. As I will show, this theme will be explored by Adam in other passages related to the Slavic population, and especially to their return to pagan practices.

According to the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, this first momentum towards Slavic Christianization under Henry was carried on and, in Adam's view, completed by Otto I. At the beginning of the second book, Adam declares that "[t]hey say also that the most valorous king Otto at that time subjected to his sway all the Slavic peoples. Those whom his father had overcome in one great battle he now pressed with such might that for the sake of

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a Sclavis, et Bremensis Ungrorum impetu demolita est." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 53 (bk. I, ch. 52).

73 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 49–50. "At vero Heinricus rex iam tunc a puero timens Deum et in eius misericordia totam suam habens fiduciam, Ungros quidem multis gravibusque preliis triumphavit. Itemque Behemos et Sorabos ab aliis regibus domitos et ceteros Sclavorum populos uno grandi prelio ita percussit, ut residui, qui fere pauci remanserant, et regi tributum et Deo christianitatem ultro promitterent." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 56 (bk. I, ch. 56).

their lives as well as of their fatherland they willingly proffered the victor both tribute and their conversion to Christianity. The whole of the pagan folk was baptized. Then were churches first built in Slavia."[74] Gradually, a narrative pattern can be recognized in the *Gesta*, one that associates the Christianization of the Slavs with their conquest. This echoes the Carolingian treatment of the Saxons and, as we will see, is only slightly different from that relating to the Scandinavians, especially if we consider the Norwegian and Swedish territories and populations.

Up to this point in the narrative, Adam has already written about the Slavs in numerous passages, a significant number of which present the idea that they were pagans. However, he does not explain what practices they followed that, in his mind, characterized them as such. Nonetheless, if we are to assume that Adam did not write his historiographical work accidentally and at random, then we must see sense in these choices. Indeed, we can assume that the description of the characteristics of Saxon paganism is sufficient for Adam and his readership. Consequently, we should accept that Adam is not primarily interested in understanding paganism, but rather, that he uses paganism as a conceptual category in his account to establish the "correct" course of historical action. As expected, this has a profound impact on the way the *Gesta* and its information should be read and interpreted, not only regarding the Saxons and Slavs, but also the Scandinavians. Adam of Bremen's compositional decisions in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* are directed by, and essentially reflect, his need to define his own historiographic identity and that of the diocese of Hamburg–Bremen.[75]

For all that, Adam does write about Slavic paganism more explicitly in some later passages. Starting from the twentieth chapter of the second book, Adam presents an extensive description of the territory and the population of the Slavs, "since the Slavs are mentioned so many times."[76] The decisive element, however, seems to be the fact that "nearly all the Slavs were at that time converted to the Christian religion through the efforts of our archbishop Adaldag."[77] Just as with the Saxons, Adam's interest in a more thorough description of Slavic religious culture is attached to news of their conversion.

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74 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 57. "Ferunt etiam ipso tempore fortissimum Ottonem regem universos populos Sclavorum imperio subiecisse. Quos pater eius uno grandi bello domuerat, ipse tanta virtute deinceps constrinxit, ut tributum et christianitatem pro vita simul et patria libenter offerrent victori, baptizatusque est totus gentilium populus, ecclesiae in Sclavania tunc primum constructae." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 65 (bk. II, ch. 5).

75 As has been pointed out in so many recent studies. For example, Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*; Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*; Goetz, "Constructing the Past"; Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität*; and Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*. For a more general approach, not centred on Adam's work, but with conclusions pointing to the same direction as a characteristic of medieval historiography, see Halsall, "The Barbarian Invasions"; Palmer, "Defining Paganism"; and Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen*.

76 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 64; "quoniam mentio Sclavorum totiens incidit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 75 (bk. II, ch. 20).

77 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 64; "Sclavi eo tempore studio nostris pontificis Adaldagi narrantur ad christianam religionem fere omnes conversi." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 75 (bk. II, ch. 20).

They are important in his narrative so "that the thoughtful reader may know from what darkness of error they were freed through the grace and mercy of God."[78] This implies, therefore, that Adam's readers should approach his descriptions of Slavic religious culture in a similar way as when Adam deals with Saxon paganism. If we conclude that Adam's treatment of Saxon paganism follows a number of traditional views and literary topoi, and thus has to be approached carefully, the same scepticism is needed when looking into his description and interpretation of Slavic paganism. Indeed, there may even be a greater need for caution since, as argued above, Adam was especially aware of the experience of violent conflict between Saxons and Slavs, and he mainly attributes this to the Slavs being barbarous and pagan. For a modern historian, this may be a hint to a somewhat biased treatment of Slavic (religious) culture; it is presented as especially linked to those characteristics deemed as barbaric in order to reinforce Adam's position in his narrative. Volker Scior discusses this in detail in his study of the "otherness" of the *sclavi* in the *Gesta*. After analyzing a selection of passages that present the Slavs as "other," Scior concludes that these descriptions cannot be considered "objective" but, rather, clearly show Adam's bias.[79]

After presenting his readership with a list of different Slavic *gentes* and their respective *civitas* and territory, Adam of Bremen starts in more detail to describe the *civitas* of Rethra, the most important place of the *Retharii*, a Slavic *gens* whom he refers to as "the mightiest of all."[80] Rethra, a *civitas vulgatissima*—that is, well-known to Adam's readership—is the "seat of idolatry"[81] among these people: "There a great temple was erected to the demons, the chief of whom is Redigast."[82] Adam then proceeds to describe this temple and its grounds. "His image is of gold, his bower bedecked with purple. The city itself has nine gates and is surrounded on all sides by a deep lake. A wooden bridge, over which approach is allowed only to those who would make sacrifices or seek oracular advice, affords a means of crossing […]. This temple they say is a four-day journey from the city of Hamburg."[83]

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78 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 11; "quo prudens lector agnoscat, a quantis errorum tenebris per Dei gratiam et misericordiam sint liberati." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk. I, ch. 7).

79 Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 102: "Adam schreibt den *Sclavi* durch die Kennzeichnung als grausame Heiden und durch die Benennung *barbari* Fremdheit in religiöser Hinsicht zu, die zur Bedrohung für die Eigenen, die christlichen Sachsen, wird, und diese Zuschreibung ist nicht Ausdruck einer vermeintlichen 'Objektivität' des Chronisten, sie ist vielmehr deutlich negativ konnotiert." See also Janson, "What Made the Pagans Pagans?"

80 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 66. "Inter quos medii et potentissimi omnium sunt Retharii." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 78 (bk. II, ch. 21).

81 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 66. "civitas eorum vulgatissima Rethre, aedes ydolatriae." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 78 (bk. II, ch. 21).

82 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 66. "Templum ibi magnum constructum est demonibus, quorum princeps est Redigast." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 78, (bk. II, ch. 21).

83 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 66. "Simulacrum eius auro, lectus ostro paratus. Civitas ipsa IX portas. habet, undique lacu profundo inclusa; pons ligneus transitum prebet, per quem tantum sacrificantibus aut responsa petentibus via conceditur […] Ad quod templum ferunt a civitate Hammaburg iter a esse IIIIor dierum." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 78–79 (bk. II, ch. 21).

This description certainly calls to mind that of the temple in Uppsala, which will appear later in Adam's *descriptio insularum aquilonis*. The similarities in the characterization of both cult places are evident. They are both temples that house idols at their centre. They are both related to mysterious cultic practices and are reported to be very rich, with special mention made in both cases of the extensive use of gold. Similar, too, have been the attempts of modern scholarship—historical, literary, and archaeological—to locate these religious structures, and also the fact that these attempts have still not presented any conclusive evidence, even if important progress has been made.

Henrik Janson, however, maintains that Adam's descriptions of the temples are allegorical. These descriptions have no anthropological value, since Adam's intent was not to transmit knowledge about paganism in Rethra, but to present and reinforce an *Idealtypus* of Slavic paganism—or, as I believe, of paganism in general, thus the similarities with other of his depictions of pagan culture. Janson points out that the typological construction of paganism in Rethra becomes even more evident if compared with the account given by Thietmar of Merseburg concerning the same religious complex. According to Thietmar, "there is a burg called Riedegost [...]. It is surrounded everywhere by a great forest [...]. [There is a] path leading to a lake that is located near by and is utterly dreadful in appearance. In the burg, there is nothing other than a skilfully made wooden shrine [...]. Marvellous sculpted images of gods and goddesses adorn its outer walls [...] Inside, stand gods made by human hands [...]. Among them, Swarozyc occupies the first place and all the heathens honour and worship him above the others."[84] As is clear, the incongruence between the two accounts is extensive, so much so that we might even imagine Adam and Thietmar to be referring to two different places if they had not both made clear they were describing the central cultic site of the Retharii.

According to Adam, the temple was located on an island in a lake (*lacu profundo inclusa*), while from Thietmar we learn that it was placed in the midst of a sacred forest (*undique silva ab incolis intacta et venerabilis circumdat magna*). A lake is present in Thietmar's account, but it is located nearby, not surrounding the *civitas* as in Adam's description. The city name itself is different: Adam calls it Rethra while Thietmar calls it Riedegost, a name Adam attributes instead to the main deity. Thietmar, for his part, calls this figure Swarozyc (*Zuarasici*) and notes the existence of many other deities, male and female, of which there are many sculptures in the temple, inside and out, while the interior sculptures are inscribed with their names. It seems clear, then, that the only connection between these descriptions is the link to the Retharii, and that if we put this

84 Thietmar of Merseburg, *Ottonian Germany*, ed. Warner, 253. "Est urbs quaedam in pago Riedirierun Riedegost nomine, tricornis ac tres in se continens portas, quam undique silva ab incolis intacta et venerabilis circumdat magna. Duae eiusdem portae cunctis introeuntibus patent; tercia, quae orientem respicit et minima est, tramitem ad mare iuxta positum et visu nimis horribile monstrat. In eadem est nil nisi fanum de ligno artificiose compositum, quod pro basibus diversarum sustentatur cornibus bestiarum. Huius parietes variae deorum dearumque imagines mirifice insculptae, ut cernentibus videtur, exterius ornant; interius autem dii stant manu facti, singulis nominibus insculptis, galeis atque loricis terribiliter vestiti, quorum primus Zuarasici dicitur et pre caeteris a cunctis gentilibus honoratur et colitur." From Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronik*, ed. Holtzmann, 302 (bk. VI, ch. 23).

to one side, we are left with two completely different cult places. This could actually be the case if we were dealing with ethnological descriptions, but, as Janson says, the discrepancies go much further: "The two depictions are totally incompatible on a literary level, but that is not very surprising […]. [Adam's] image of Rethra, consequently, was not a scientific anthropological report. It was not to be understood literally. It 'signified' and depicted 'the lost souls of those who serves idols', i. e. the souls of the pagan, or rather apostate Slavs."[85] If this is true, then Adam's treatment of Slavic paganism in his depiction of the temple in Rethra may be similar to that of Saxon paganism, as I pointed out above. Adam is not interested in an anthropological description of cultic practices occurring at the frontiers of Christendom, but rather in promoting and justifying the expansion and—especially in the case of the Slavs—conquest and subjugation of those populations to the political and ecclesiastical structures represented by the archdiocese of Hamburg–Bremen.

The account of Jumne in the following chapter of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* can be seen as Adam's attempt to reinforce this position. Adam writes that Jumne is the greatest of all cities in Europe, "[f]or even alien Saxons also have the right to reside there on equal terms with others, provided only that while they sojourn there they do not openly profess Christianity. In fact, all its inhabitants still blunder about in pagan rites. Otherwise, so far as morals and hospitality are concerned, a more honorable or kindlier folk cannot be found."[86] As in the case of the Saxons, here Adam recognizes some of the Slavs' virtues: hospitality, honour, and kindness are characteristic of the *gens* living in Jumne, characteristics that Adam complains are lacking even in some Christians (see chapter 4 below). And yet, despite their good morals and laudable attitude towards Saxon foreigners—welcoming them to live and trade in Jumne—they still needed to be (properly) Christianized, because they remained pagans as long as they did not assume their position under the care of the Church of Hamburg.

This extensive passage with the description of the *gentes* and of the territories and *civitates* of the Slavs, as well as the remarks on their religious culture and morals, is concluded by Adam in the twenty-third chapter of the *Gesta*'s second book, with his mention of the role of Emperor Otto I in converting the Slavs. According to his account: "These remarks about the Slavs and their country may suffice, because through the valour of the great Otto they were all at that time converted to Christianity."[87] Thus we encounter the completion of Adam's imagined picture concerning the Christianization of the religious "other" living on the borders of Christendom—but inside the territory claimed by

85 Janson, "What Made the Pagans Pagans?," 26–27.

86 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 67. "Est sane maxima omnium, quas Europa claudit, civitatum, quam incolunt Sclavi cum aliis gentibus, Grecis et Barbaris; nam et advenae Saxones parem cohabitandi legem acceperunt, si tamen christianitatis titulum ibi morantes non publicaverint. Omnes enim adhuc paganicis ritibus oberrant, ceterum moribus et hospitalitate nulla gens honestior aut benignior poterit inveniri." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 79 (bk. II, ch. 22).

87 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 68. "Haec de Sclavis et patria eorum, quoniam virtute magni Ottonis ad christianitatem eo tempore omnes conversi sunt, dicta sufficiant." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 81 (bk. II, ch. 23).

Hamburg in its ambitions to Christianize and legally bind the *gentes* of the *aquilo*. When we read Adam's assertion that his description of Saxon paganism is necessary so that his readers can know the kind of religious and cultural practices that are still present in his contemporary *Sclavania*,[88] then we have to understand that beneath any objective statement lies Adam's conceptual framework. It is this conceptual framework that determines his stereotypical handling of the subject and his reinforcement of political and religious identities.[89] It is, therefore, safe to declare that the description of Slavic paganism in Rethra plays a logical role in the construction of Adam's historical narrative, which seeks to emphasize not the religiosity of the *gentes* Christianized by Otto, but the joint action of imperial power and the archiepiscopate to secure an institutional position among the Slavs, just as had occurred during the Christianization of Saxony under Charlemagne and the Anglo-Saxon missionaries.

Significantly, the theme of Slavic paganism reappears in Adam's narrative just at the point where the Slavs, after the death of Otto III and the subsequent disputes over the imperial throne, rebelled against imperial rule over their population and territory, a rebellion led by the *principes* of the Winuli Mistivoi and Mizzidrag. This revolt is marked by the destruction first of Nordalbingia *ferro et igne*—by iron and fire—and then by setting "all the churches" in Slavic territory on fire and killing all the Christian priests and ministers.[90] The Slavs, wrote Adam, "left not a vestige of Christianity beyond the Elbe,"[91] and from this point on in the *Gesta* they are considered rebellious apostates. To reinforce this argument, Adam goes on to narrate the various tortures and martyrdoms imposed on Christians by the Slavs during their revolt. He thus ensures the association of Slavic paganism with violence and barbarism, just as he did when depicting the Saxons, and establishes a direct relationship between this outbreak and the internal political crisis that arose in the Empire. There is no need to point to the opposition between this account of the rebellion of the Slavs and the narrative of the conversion of the Saxons under Charlemagne, or of the same Slavs under Otto I.

Adam actually excuses the Slavs to some degree for rebelling against the power structures[92] and returning to their pagan practices. As I will demonstrate in chapter 4,

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88 "Haec tulimus excerpta ex scriptis Einhardi de adventu, moribus et supersticione Saxonum, quam adhuc Sclavi et Sueones ritu paganico servare videntur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk. I, ch. 7).

89 As pointed out by Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen*, especially 135ff. where the author discusses the stereotypical depiction of paganism in the writings of the Early and High Middle Ages. On political identities as decisive elements in Adam of Bremen's construction of paganism, see Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; and especially concerning Rethra, Janson, "What Made the Pagans Pagans?"

90 As narrated in Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 101–3 (bk. II, ch. 42).

91 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 83. "His ducibus Sclavi rebellantes totam primo Nortalbingiam ferro et igne depopulati sunt; deinde reliquam peragrantes Sclavoniam omnes ecclesias incenderunt et ad solum usque diruerunt; sacerdotes autem et reliquos ecclesiarum ministros variis suppliciis enecantes, nullum christianitatis vestigium trans Albiam reliquerunt." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 102–103 (bk. II, ch. 42).

92 See Janson, "What Made the Pagans Pagans?"

it was the pressure exerted by the Saxon dukes that pushed the Slavs into rebellion and, consequently, back to paganism. This may be connected to the fact that "a closer examination of what qualified them and others as *pagani* in contemporary theology shows that it did not necessarily have anything to do with a return to a pagan religion,"[93] as Janson states. It rather reflects Adam's own conceptions regarding Christianity and its spread beyond the Empire's northern frontiers. The Christianization of pagans should be strictly undertaken, according to Adam's views presented in the *Gesta*, lest it be considered "invalid" and the Christianized population still be considered pagan. To comprehend Slavic paganism in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, we must be aware of those peculiarities. Furthermore, these depictions also point to Adam of Bremen's conception of history and suggest a connection between Hamburg–Bremen's historical role and the greater universal history of Christian expansion to "all the nations and to the end of time,"[94] an Augustinian–Orosian idea of history. In this sense, Slavic paganism is employed by Adam to explain history itself. This becomes even clearer when we look at his treatment of the Scandinavians.

Paganism in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden

Paganism in the Scandinavian territories is certainly a recurrent theme in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. Adam's references to pagan practices among the Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes are numerous in his work, especially when compared to the number of times he refers to the paganism of the Slavs and Saxons. However, as with the Slavs, there are not many passages where Adam tells the reader what it actually is that constitutes paganism amongst the Scandinavian populations. Rather, he employs the same formula concerning religious cultures strange to Christianity that we have already seen in relation to the Saxons and the Slavs. The characterization of the Scandinavians as pagans in Adam's account connects his particular concepts to the wider idea of history as a process towards the eternal salvation of humankind. Through his historical account, Adam of Bremen creates a place for his archbishopric in this wider salvational schema and attaches it to its special assignment concerning the Christianization of the northern *gentes*, the *legatio* he associates with the foundation and the activities of the archbishops since Ansgar in the ninth century.

Modern historiography seems to have dismissed this fundamental aspect of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, or at least placed it in the backseat, in favour of finding some kind of anthropological interest in Adam's descriptions. Indeed, a good number of scholars still try to do so by comparing Adam's narrative to other sources, textual or material. There are many possible reasons for this tendency in modern historiography. According to Henrik Janson, it has suited nationalist and other ideological agendas, with only a very few scholars being prepared to read the *Gesta* from the point of view of the author

93 Janson, "What Made the Pagans Pagans?," 27.

94 Matt. 28:19–20 "[G]o and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit […] And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." This and other translations into English of the Bible are taken from the New International Version.

and his readership.[95] It is, therefore, important to keep this in mind when looking into Adam's treatment of Scandinavian paganism.

Adam's first mention of the Scandinavian peoples points to the two main characteristics that will mark his treatment of *dani*, *nortmanni*, and *sueones* throughout his text. They are *gentes ferocissimas*[96] and they are said to still follow a *ritus paganicus*.[97] Both observations are at the core of Adam's image of otherness regarding the northern populations. He presents them as pagan and barbaric. In fact, he does not seem to effectively differentiate these categories, as paganism is many times referred to as synonymous with barbaric behaviour, and vice versa.[98] Adam also justifies his interest in the Scandinavian peoples quite early in the narrative, a declaration that does not seem to have been sufficiently considered by scholars searching for information in the text about the kind of paganism practised by the northern peoples. As Adam clearly states after informing his readership of Charlemagne's plans to constitute Hamburg "as the metropolitan see for all the Slavic and Danish peoples,"[99] it seems appropriate to give a description of the Scandinavians—in this case, the Danes—after having mentioned them as subjects of his diocese.[100] Adam of Bremen is, therefore, very clear regarding his reasons for including any aspect of Scandinavian history or culture: they are only interesting as they serve Hamburg–Bremen's designated role in the broader historical context.

Adam's concern with the situation among the Danes and Swedes is therefore oriented by the actions of his champions in the *legatio gentium*, that is, by Ansgar, the first bishop of the unified diocese,[101] and by some carefully selected later archbishops, who, in Adam's eyes, tried to follow the example and meet the standards set by the founding saint. This partly explains his treatment of the northern *gentes* and sets the background for understanding his references to Scandinavian paganism.

The first indication of Adam's conception of Danish paganism can be found in the *Gesta*'s opening book, where he discusses the internal struggles of the Danish kingdom. After the death of a king named Horik—who, according to Adam, was Christianized by Ansgar, allowed his subjects to take up the Christian faith, and ordered the building of a Christian church in Schleswig, which prompted a "countless multitude of heathen"[102]

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95 Janson, "What Made the Pagans Pagans?," 27.

96 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 7 (bk. I, ch. 5).

97 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk. I, ch. 7).

98 On this, see especially Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*. Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde* and Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität* point in the same direction.

99 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 19. "disponens eandem Hammaburgensem ecclesiam cunctis Sclavorum Danorumque gentibus metropolem statuere." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 18–19 (bk. I, ch. 14).

100 "Et quoniam mentionem Danorum semel fecimus, dignum memoria videtur" Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 19 (bk. I, ch. 14).

101 In Adam's opinion. Opposing this interpretation, see Knibbs, *Ansgar, Rimbert*. Janson, "Ansgar und die frühe Geschichte" has argued against Knibbs's analysis.

102 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 29. "Ubi regem Danorum Horicum inveniens christianum reddidit. Is statim ecclesiam in portu maritimo erexit apud Sliaswig, data pariter licentia, ut

to become Christian and be baptized—a second Horik assumes the throne and starts persecuting the Christians, expelling the priests and closing the churches. The reason for this was, as Adam reports it, an inborn ferocity of the young king.[103] Adam does not describe Horik specifically as being pagan, but this can be understood from the context; namely, in the following chapter, Adam tells of this Horik's conversion, also thanks to Ansgar, and of the building of the second church in Danish territory, this time in Ribe. Adam also comments that this younger Horik ordered all his subjects to become Christians like him.[104] There is also a clear parallel to the situation among the Slavs, as discussed above. Horik is depicted in Adam's writings as a pagan because he opposed the presence of the priests and closed the churches founded by Archbishop Ansgar. There is no mention of religious practices of any kind at this point, and the mere indication that Horik was ferocious—that is, a barbarian in some sense—seems to be enough to correlate his attitudes toward Christians with the practice of some imagined form of paganism. Again, the real issue is not whether Horik actually practised any kind of pagan rituals but that, for Adam, the simple fact that Horik opposed the extension of Hamburg's ecclesiastical dominance over his territory was enough to mark him as pagan. Janson has already pointed to this,[105] but has concentrated on the political aspects of Adam's manipulation of the "pagan" issue. I do not contest this, but believe it is still too narrow an interpretation to explain the *Gesta*'s narrative. Adam's intention is to depict the role of Hamburg–Bremen in a broader context that encompasses an entire salvation history.

It is because Adam of Bremen subscribes to this historical–philosophical schema that he writes about Scandinavian paganism, rather than a supposed ethnographic or anthropological interest in their religious culture and ritual practices. This becomes evident when we realize that his descriptions of Scandinavian paganism are always connected to an account dealing with either a concluded process of Christianization, or one that is needed. Even the *descriptio insularum aquilonis*, which is still considered as being of an ethnographic and geographical nature, must be read as fulfilling a role in this narrative context.

When Adam describes Ansgar's mission to the Swedes in the first book of his *Gesta*, for example, he decides to use information about the casting of lots and calling on deities at the *thing* in Birka, which he had read in the *Vita Anskarii*. He does this so he can contrast the Christianity brought by Ansgar with the religious practices of the Swedes:

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quisquis vellet in regno suo christianus fieret. Infinita gentilium multitudo credidit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 31 (bk. I, ch. 25).

103 "de styrpe autem regia nemo omnium remaneret preter unum puerum, nomine Horicum. Iste mox ut regnum Danorum suscepit, ingenito furore super christicolas efferatus sacerdotes Dei expulit et ecclesias claudi precepit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 34 (bk. I, ch. 28).

104 "Ad quem sanctus Dei confessor Ansgarius venire non trepidans, comitante gratia divina crudelem tyrannum sic placatum reddidit, ut christianitatem ipse susciperet suisque omnibus, ut christiani fierent, per edictum mandaret, insuper et in alio portu regni sui apud Ripam extrueret ecclesiam in Dania secundam." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 35 (bk. I, ch. 29).

105 Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Janson, "Adam of Bremen and the Conversion of Scandinavia"; Janson, "What Made the Pagans Pagans?"

"Anticipated by the mercy of God, Ansgar found the king so favorably disposed that at his bidding and with the consent of the people and according to the casting of the lots and the response of the idol, he was permitted to build a church there and everyone was given leave to be baptized."[106] In this passage, we can clearly see that Adam's focus is not on the description of pagan rites. On the contrary, he is interested in the interpretation of divine action upon the missionary project of expansion. This is evident both in the opening sentence of the passage and in the highlighted effects of Ansgar's trip, that is, the foundation of a church and the king's permission for a priest to stay in Birka to teach the Swedes about the Christian religion. Because of heavenly intervention, the people gathered in the *thing*, the king himself, the lots cast, and even the consulted pagan idols, all favoured the establishment of a Christian cult centre. Christianity is the focus here, not paganism. Consequently, there is no possible anthropological value to Adam's narrative of the rituals, because he could have simply invented them. This does not mean, however, that the Swedes did not follow religious practices alien to the Christian chronicler, which may well have involved the casting of lots and the consultation of idols; they may indeed have done so. Yet, even if this is true, which we cannot know for sure, the essential point here is that Adam employs this short description of a pagan ritual in such a generic way that any claim to find in his text a specific religious culture or ritual must be dismissed.

Another interesting description of pagan practices in Scandinavia is given in Adam of Bremen's account of Olaf Tryggvason, who is widely considered by modern scholarship to have been the first Christian king of Norway and the first ruler to systematically try to impose Christianity on his Norwegian subjects.[107] As Birgit and Peter Sawyer point out in their book: "The early progress of Christianity in Norway has been obscured by the emphasis later put on the role of Olav Tryggvason. According to Ari, Olav was responsible for the conversion of both Norway and Iceland, and later writers followed Ari's lead."[108] Interestingly, early steps toward the Christianization of Norwegian territory are hinted at by Adam,[109] and he tends to emphasize the role of Danish expansionism over Norwegian territory as decisive for the Christianization of *Norguegia*, rather than the role of local rulers. This is evident in his treatment of Olaf Tryggvason.

The first time Olaf is mentioned in the *Gesta*, Adam is recounting the achievements of missionary bishops acting under the rule of the archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen in spreading and strengthening the Christian presence in Denmark, Sweden, and Nor-

106 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 30. "Quem preveniente misericordia Dei ita placatum invenit, ut ex a eius imperio et populi consensu et iactu sortis et ydoli responso ecclesia ibidem fabricata et baptismi licentia omnibus concessa sit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 32 (bk. I, ch. 26).

107 Nordeide, *The Viking Age as a Period of Religious Transformation*, 5–15. Nordeide presents an important overview of earlier scholarship on the issue. More recently Sverre Bagge states that "[o]n these matters, Harald Bluetooth and the sagas probably give an accurate account, although the latter exaggerate the importance of the two main missionary kings, Olav Tryggvason (995–1000) and St. Olav Haraldsson (1015–1030)." Bagge, *Cross and Scepter*, 67.

108 Birgit and Peter Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia*, 103.

109 For example, in Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 83–84 (bk. II, ch. 25).

way. After describing how three bishops baptized many Scandinavians, thus expanding the presence of Christianity in that region, Adam informs his readership that Olaf Tryggvason was among the baptized people. According to the *magister scholarum*, "[t]hese men, we have learned […] went on into Norway and Sweden where they gathered many people unto Jesus Christ."[110] There, in Norway, Adam continues, "tradition has it that they baptized the son of Tryggve, Olaf, who then ruled the Norwegians, among which folk he was the first Christian."[111] This version of Olaf Tryggvason adopting the Christian faith and being baptized under the auspices of the archdiocese of Hamburg–Bremen seems to be later corrected by an insertion in the B and C class manuscripts, according to Schmeidler's edition. But if we are to assume, alongside the editor, that A constitutes the original version of Adam's work, we can accept that Adam here tried to employ his overarching interpretative schema, in which the prerogatives of the archdiocese are recurrently highlighted by associating the central figures in the Christianization of Scandinavia with the influence of prelates acting on behalf of the *legatio* received by Ansgar.

The text presented in manuscript A, on the other hand, anticipates the discussion Adam presents in bk. II, ch. 37, where he points to those other stories which, he writes, were widespread in the north. "Others say that of old and at this time certain bishops and priests of England left their home for the sake of doing mission work and that they baptized Olaf and others."[112] It may seem like a contradiction to show the efforts and successes of English priests in the Christianization of Norway, since Adam is trying to emphasize Hamburg's precedence over these territories and populations. However, taken in context with Adam's following statement and his account of the presence of English bishops in Norway in bk. II, ch. 57, under Olaf Haraldsson, it seems that, despite not following his preferred pattern, the Christianization still fell within the wider scenario of a salvific interpretation of history that marks the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*.

Adam concludes the passage in bk. II, ch. 37 with the remark that "[s]ome preach 'out of envy and contention; but some also for good will' and love. 'But what then? So that by all means, whether by occasion, or by truth, Christ be preached; and,' he says, 'in this also I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.'"[113] The double opposition of concepts in this quotation of Paul's letter to the Philippians is evident. Just as Paul stated that there may be

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110 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 80. "Hos viros comperimus illo tempore claros in ea regione, aliis qui adhuc supervixerant a diebus Adaldagi non ociosis. Qui etiam in Norvegiam et Suediam progressi populum multum Iesu Christo collegerunt." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 97 (bk. II, ch. 36).

111 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 80. "A quibus traditur Olaph Trucconis filius, qui tunc Nortmannis imperavit, baptizatus ex ea gente primus fuisse christianus." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 97–98 (bk. II, ch. 36).

112 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 80. "Alii dicunt olim et tunc ab Anglia quosdam episcopos vel presbyteros euangelizandi gratia egressos a domo, ab eisque Olaph baptizatum et ceteros." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 98 (bk. II, ch. 37).

113 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 80. "'Quidam predicant per invidiam et contentionem, quidam autem propter bonam voluntatem et karitatem. Quid enim? Dum omnimodo sive per occasionem, sive per veritatem Christus annuntietur, et in hoc', inquit 'gaudeo o et gaudebo'." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 98 (bk. II, ch. 37).

preachers who do not seek to spread the Christian teachings for the true (that is, the correct) reason, so, too, is Adam suggesting that even if the English bishops are preaching without due respect for Hamburg's exclusivity, in accordance with the *legatio*, the resulting propagation of Christianity is reason enough to rejoice. Adam's approval, however, fades just as the ecclesiastical structures formed from this movement based on English preachers subtract from the influence of Hamburg. This becomes evident when Adam criticizes these English preachers elsewhere, by pointing out that they would not willingly submit to the archbishop's power.[114] This whole episode serves as a background to help us understand Adam's description of Olaf Tryggvason in the fortieth chapter of the second book.

Adam begins this chapter, which narrates the death of Olaf Tryggvason as a result of his conflict with the Danish king Sven Forkbeard, by stating that the Norwegian, learning of an alliance between the Danish and the Swedish kings, decided to invade Denmark and expel Sven, whom he believed was a weak ruler.[115] Up to this point, Adam has presented Sven Forkbeard as a pagan. A son of Harald Bluetooth, the king responsible for the introduction of Christianity in Denmark (under the direct influence of Archbishop Unni, as Adam sees it), Sven rebelled against his father and apostatized. As a fervent pagan, after his seizure of the throne he was responsible for trouble with the archbishopric and for the Christians in Denmark. Only in ch. 39 does Adam change his narrative and make Sven return to his childhood faith in the Christian God. This transformation in Sven's religious behaviour is unexplained by Adam and is suspiciously detached from any mention of an intervention by the Church of Hamburg–Bremen. And yet it seems to fit perfectly with Adam's interpretation of the following events, in which Sven Forkbeard defeats Olaf Tryggvason.

This sudden change in the historical account regarding Sven mirrors the reversal in the narrative surrounding Olaf Tryggvason. As I pointed out above, Olaf first appears in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* when he is baptized by prelates associated with the archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen, and then again as a Christian coming from England, where he may have been baptized and from where he brought priests to Christianize Norway. After his defeat in the sea battle against Sven, however, Olaf is himself described as being an apostate or even a pagan through and through: "Some relate that Olaf had been a Christian, some that he had forsaken Christianity; all, however, affirm that he was skilled in divination, was an observer of the lots, and had placed all his hope in the prognostication of birds. […] In fact, as they say, he was also given to the practice

114 As can be seen, for example, in bk. II, ch. 55. Adam writes about the conflict between Archbishop Unwan and the English bishops sent by King Cnut the Great to Christianize different territories of Scandinavia. "Zelatus est hoc noster archiepiscopus Unwan. Et dicitur Gerbrandum redeuntem ab Anglia cepisse, quem ab Elnodo Anglorum archiepiscopo cognovit esse ordinatum. Ille, quod necessitas persuasit, satisfaciens, fidelitatem Hammaburgensi cathedrae cum subiectione debitam spondens familiarissimus deinceps archiepiscopo effectus est." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 115–16 (bk. II, ch. 55).

115 "Audiens autem rex Nortmannorum Olaph, filius Trucci, de coniunctione regum iratus est contra Suein, ratus eum quasi derelictum a Deo tociensque depulsum a sua etiam multitudine facile posse depelli." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 100 (bk. II, ch. 40).

of the magic art and supported as his household companions all the magicians, with whom that land was overrun, and, deceived by their error, perished."[116] This is indeed a particularly interesting and revealing change in the narrative regarding the Norwegian king and is, I believe, directly related to Adam's conception of history and Hamburg–Bremen's role in it.

Adam identifies Olaf Tryggvason with exactly the same rhetoric as he employs when characterizing the Saxons as pagans. This similarity points to an image of the Norwegian king that is mainly constructed with classical literary topoi connected to the concept of "otherness"—deriving, for instance, from Tacitus's *Germania*. These topoi were appropriated by the early Christian apologists, and were later to form the argumentative basis of the creation of a "pagan religion" that the Christians were supposed to oppose and eliminate. Modern historiography has widely discussed Olaf Tryggvason and his role in the Christianization of Norway, but usually on the basis of later sources, particularly Norse ones. Perhaps the main reason that Adam's account has not much figured in these studies is that it is quite economic with its news regarding Olaf, and also because Adam is not especially well-informed about the Norwegian historical experience.[117]

In general, there seems to be a particular mistrust in modern historiography with regards to Adam's narrative of Olaf's Christianity. It is seen as being biased both by his proximity to the Danish royal court and because of the centrality of the archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen in his account of the Christianization of the north. Lars Lönnroth's work is important here. According to Sverre Bagge, "Lars Lönnroth has questioned the role of Olaf Tryggvason and regarded his conversion of Norway partly as an Icelandic invention, an expression of his importance in the conversion of Iceland, and partly as an invention by the anti-clerical or 'National Church' faction in Trøndelag, i.e., the adherents of King Sverrir (r. 1177–1202) and his predecessors."[118] In this sense, there is no secure way of determining which of the positions—that of Adam of Bremen or that of later sources—is more accurate in describing Tryggvason's actual influence over the Christianization of Norway. However, this issue is also not central to my investigation. What we are concerned with is how and for what reason the author of the *Gesta* opted to present Olaf in such a dubious way, varying his interpretation of the king's influence from the very positive account of bk. II, ch. 36 to the very negative of bk. II, ch. 40.

As mentioned above, I believe the change in narrative tack is related to Tryggvason's favour shown to the English priests and their settlement in Norwegian territory without due consent from the archbishopric, and the further resistance of the priests against

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116 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 82. "Narrant eum aliqui christianum fuisse, quidam christianitatis desertorem; omnes autem affirmant peritum auguriorum, servatorem sortium, et in avium prognosticis omnem spem suam posuisse. Quare etiam cognomen accepit, ut Olaph Craccaben diceretur. Nam et artis magicae, ut aiunt, studio deditus omnes, quibus illa redundat patria, maleficos habuit domesticos eorumque deceptus errore periit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 100–101, bk. II, ch. 40).

117 Bagge, "The Making of a Missionary King," 481.

118 Bagge identifies these conflicting views regarding Olaf Tryggvason's role when discussing different interpretations of the Christianization of Norway, "The Making of a Missionary King," 480.

submitting to Hamburg–Bremen's ecclesiastical authority. This may reflect political issues contemporary to the composition of Adam's work, as suggested by Henrik Janson, but is certainly also linked to his conceptions regarding the expected course of events in history. Adam's defence of the political prerogatives over the northern territories is subject to his views on the *legatio gentium*, which he considers practically equal to the fulfillment of the idea of Christian purpose in history, as established by patristic commentary. There are some strong indications in this direction, especially if we consider the possible influence of Orosius on Adam's treatment of paganism—indeed, he mentions the *Historiae adversus paganos* right at the beginning of his *Gesta*. This hypothesis regarding Adam's conceptions further explains his remarks on the English missionaries in bk. II, ch. 36, which from a purely political approach may seem contradictory. The difference from the political analysis as presented by Janson is undoubtedly subtle, however, it has fundamental implications for approaching Adam's work.

The account from the fourth book of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* may hold the clue to identifying Adam's conceptions more clearly, and it is in this book, in ch. 26, that we find his famous description of the temple in Uppsala. This well-known passage from the *descriptio insularum aquilonis*, where Adam describes a temple, its deities, and the rituals performed in it, is considered by researchers of northern paganism to be a key source. Adam gives his readers relatively detailed information on a building he describes both as a *templum* and a *triclinium*. He names three deities, *Thor*, *Wodan*, and *Fricco*, as well as noting their attributes and the type of cult to which they were connected. He also describes ritual practices involving sacrifice, including that of humans, and the connection of those sacrifices with the worship conducted in or linked to sacred groves. And finally, Adam mentions incantations that accompany the rituals, which he calls *libationes*, inferring the use or presence of drinking during these complex performances described in connection with the temple site. Based on these pieces of information, research—especially in the fields of history, archeology, and (religious) ethnography—has speculated for a long time on the form and organization of Scandinavian religion. So, it is crucial to address this issue in Adam's historical narrative once again.

Adam of Bremen's description of the pagan culture and rituals among the *Sueones* is not restricted to his notes on the Uppsala temple site, however. Indeed, even in his fourth book the description of the temple is only one of his references to pagan practices in Sweden, although it is the longest. If we follow Adam's conception of paganism as being based on his account of Saxon practices from the beginning of his work, then we should start the analysis of Swedish paganism in the twenty-second chapter of the fourth book, rather than the twenty-sixth with its discussion of the Uppsala temple. In bk. IV, ch. 22, Adam declares that the Swedes "invoke the aid of one of the multitude of gods they worship. Then after the victory they are devoted to him and set him above the others."[119] Adam here employs one of the typical categories for Christian identification of pagan religions. The multitude of deities constitutes a basic characteristic of

119 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 204. "Si quando vero preliantes in angustia positi sunt, ex multitudine deorum, quos colunt, unum invocant auxilio; ei post victoriam deinceps sunt devoti illumque ceteris anteponunt." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 253 (bk. IV, ch. 22).

all the religious cultures identified with the concept of paganism. This generalization allows Adam to concentrate on the elements he wants to underline and that make up the argumentative basis of his historical account, without having to engage in a discussion about the religious practices of the "other" described in his work. Adam solves this logical tension by informing his readers about the Christianization of the *Sueones*—at least in its initial stages—when they incorporated the Christian God into their pantheon. Indeed, "by common consent, however, they now declare that the God of the Christians is the most powerful of all. Other gods often fail them, but He always stands by, a surest 'helper in due time in tribulation.'"[120] As is clear in this excerpt, Adam makes use of a generalized and schematic paganism to point to the presence of Christianity. On the other hand, it still reinforces the need for further tutelage and Hamburg–Bremen's missionary involvement with the Swedes, since they still also adhere to their traditional pagan deities. Adam seems to indicate that pagans need to not only accept the Christian religion, but also have to adopt the "right" form of Christianity. This "correct" Christianity is not only seen in connection to the archdiocese of Hamburg–Bremen, as pointed out by Henrik Janson,[121] but also from the point of view of Adam's own conception of Christianity—expressed by ecclesiastical politics, but also by certain moral and historical–philosophical positions.

This conceptual framework of Adam's also explains his description of the monsters living in the far north of the Swedish lands. "There are Amazons, and Cynocephali, and Cyclops who have one eye on their foreheads; there are those [whom] Solinus calls Himantopodes, who hop on one foot, and those who delight in human flesh as food, and as they are shunned, so may they also rightfully be passed over in silence."[122] These references to fantastic[123] or "unnatural" creatures in Adam's histori-

120 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 204. "Deum autem christianorum iam communi sentencia fortiorem clamant omnibus esse; alios deos sepe fallere, illum porro semper astare certissimum adiutorem in oportunitatibus." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 253 (bk. IV, ch. 22).

121 Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*.

122 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 206. "Ibi sunt Amazones, ibi Cynocephali, ibi Ciclopes, qui unum in fronte habent oculum; ibi sunt hii, quos Solinus dicit Ymantopodes, uno pede salientes, et illi, qui humanis carnibus delectantur pro cibo, ideoque sicut fugiuntur, ita etiam iure tacentur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 257 (bk. IV, ch. 25).

123 Scior (*Das Eigene und das Fremde* 119–20) opposes the idea that the *monstra* in the *Gesta* and in medieval literature in general are equivalent to the modern category of "fantastic" creatures: "Mit den Darstellungen von *monstra* in mittelalterlichen Texten hat sich die Forschung schon häufig beschäftigt, wenngleich die Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte dabei kaum einmal Beachtung gefunden hat. In Untersuchungen über die Beschreibungen von *monstra* zeigt sich besonders prägnant, daß ein überwiegender Teil der Forschung mittelalterliche Darstellungen an ihrem realistischem Gehalt mißt. Eine Konsequenz dieser Perspektive ist die überaus häufige Verwendung des Ausdrucks 'Fabelwesen' für die *monstra*. Obwohl der Begriff erst seit dem 18. Jahrhundert gebraucht wird, scheint er dennoch vielen hervorragend auf das Mittelalter anwendbar zu sein, da er geradezu als Beleg für die häufig beschworene Mythengläubigkeit dieses Zeitraums gilt. Folgerichtig wird mittelalterlichen Autoren deshalb oftmals attestiert, zu einer Unterscheidung zwischen 'realistisch' und 'unrealistisch' unfähig gewesen zu sein, und dieser Mangel zum Kennzeichen des mittelalterlichen Weltbildes insgesamt erhoben."

cal narrative evoke a wider sense that Jacques Le Goff characterized as *le merveilleux*, the wonderful or marvellous in the medieval *imaginaire*.[124] According to Le Goff, the medieval marvellous constitutes a kind of deformation of the natural world and is, therefore, also "natural."[125] These creatures do not exist, but they could exist, and that is probably the reason they exert so much influence in medieval narratives. "They have a cathartic function connecting the strange and the stranger"[126] and make both intelligible and explainable.

However, Le Goff's position seems still to be attached to a notion external to the analyzed source itself, which tries to approach the source from a modern understanding of the marvellous and fantastic. As Scior rightly points out, in Le Goff there is a certain tension between the knowledge of the medieval notion of *monstra* and a modern notion of naturality. Indeed, his treatment of the marvellous has the effect of suggesting the singularity of medieval thinking, and tends to present the Middle Ages as a period when people were generally credulous and had a special difficulty in discerning the "real" from the "unreal."[127]

By contrast, Volker Scior overtly challenges the idea of comparing Adam's assertions regarding the *monstra* with a presumed "reality." As he points out, "it does not matter if the Amazons actually ever existed—as it does not matter if *sclavi* and *dani* really did behave as Adam described them. For the chronicler does not depict 'actual strangers', 'true barbarians' or *monstra*. In fact, he ascribes them with these characteristics and features."[128] Looking specifically for Adam's mentions of the *monstra* and their whereabouts—Adam is very particular in the placement of every group in his *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, including the monstrous creatures—it becomes clear that he associates the *monstra* with the ends of the earth. Scior equates this with the limits of the archdiocese's prerogatives in the northern regions. He argues, further, that this is the reason why Adam transports certain groups of *monstra* traditionally associated with other "ends of

124 Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval*.

125 Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval*, 35–36: "Une grande partie du domaine du merveilleux a consisté en un élargissement, une déformation du monde normal, du monde naturel. Les géants, les nains, les adjonctions d'un ou de plusieurs organes, ne sont pas habituels mais, au fond, 'naturels'; de même l'être fabuleux et mythique et, à la limite, les Mischwesen, avec ces formes extrêmes que l'on trouve chez Bosch, qui deviennent insupportables, qui ne sont plus seulement un mélange d'homme et d'animal, mais qui se terminent par des objets."

126 Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval*, 36: "La fonction purgative du merveilleux qui lie étranger et étrange, qui détourne dans le monde de l'autre les fantasmes inquiétants, se rencontre aussi dans le monde occidental."

127 As discussed by Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 120. Cf. note 123.

128 Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 120–21: "So ist es unerheblich, ob etwa die Amazones jemals tatsächlich existierten – ebenso wie es nicht entscheidend ist, ob sich Sclavi und Dani wirklich so verhielten, wie Adam sie beschrieb. Denn der Chronist bildet nicht 'tatsächliche Fremde', 'wirkliche Barbaren' oder *monstra* ab, er schreibt ihnen diese Merkmale und Eigenschaften zu […]. Läßt man den engen und zum Teil auch wertend eingesetzten modernen Realitätsbegriff außer Acht, so sind auch die mittelalterlichen Beschreibungen der monstra als Aspekte einer realistischen Beschreibung der Welt anzusehen."

the world"—such as the *Ymantopodes*, for example—to the northern territories beyond Sweden, in the Rhiphean Mountains.

Although this may be one of the possible explanations for Adam's appropriation of these creatures, I believe it is rather his conception of history that invites their presence at the northern "end of the world." The modern idea of a medieval "end of the world" is in this sense counterproductive because it is related to an overwhelmingly geographical understanding, whilst the medieval idea of the world's end was a concept both geographical and historical. This is indicated by the apocalyptic ideas present in patristic and medieval theology. Medieval historiography, especially chronicles like the *Cronica* of Otto of Freising,[129] often included discussions of the "end of the world," inserting apocalyptic events into their narrative as part of history. In doing so, they reveal certain expectations regarding millenarianism, which associated the end of time with the end of space. Following the biblical text literally, the apocalypse would involve the destruction and recomposition of both the geographical environment (represented by the new Jerusalem) and the temporal environment (through the destruction of time and the beginning of eternity, that is, non-time).

In Adam of Bremen's narrative and its connection to the missionary activities of the archdiocese, this concept of the "end of the world" that incorporates an "end of history" seems to be attached to the last verses of the Gospel of Matthew, the so-called "Great Commission," in which Jesus orders his followers to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."[130] This short commandment is regarded as the foundation of the missionary impulse behind the expansion of Christianity.[131] In Adam's text, the *legatio gentium* of the archbishopric therefore points to this general idea of expanding the Christian religion by preaching to all nations. This also forms the basis by which we can understand Adam's thoroughness in describing the communities already Christianized by the efforts of the missionary enterprise lead by Hamburg–Bremen. Here, too, we find grounds for the presence of the *monstra* in Adam's narrative. Beyond the territories of the Swedes, Norwegians, and *Scritefingis*—probably the Sami—there were no more *nationes* to be Christianized, but only monstrous creatures. The interpretation of this passage by Volker Scior conveys this idea. The "end of the world" is equivalent to the end of Hamburg–Bremen's ecclesiastical jurisdiction because there are no other communities to be Christianized beyond the northern limits of the diocese.

However, if we look at the last verse of the "Great Commission," then this concept, which is plainly geographical, has to be expanded to incorporate a temporal dimen-

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129 Otto of Freising, *Chronica*, ed. Hofmeister. On Adam's conceptions regarding history, see Goetz, "Geschichtsschreibung und Recht"; Hallencreutz, *Adam Bremensis and Sueonia*; Trommer, "Komposition und Tendenz."

130 Matt. 28:19.

131 As pointed out by Angenendt (*Toleranz und Gewalt*, 372): "Vom christlichen Selbstverständnis her besteht […] die Verpflichtung zur Mission […]. Die Ausbreitung war ein Prozeß aus sich selbst heraus, aus innerer Sendung: 'Geht zu allen Völkern (Mt 28,19).'" See also Sievernich, "Bis an die Grenzen der Erde."

sion, which I believe is present in Adam's work. In the gospel, Jesus further reassures his disciples by telling them "I am with you always, to the very end of the age."[132] The missionary work that the Christian Saviour commands his disciples to carry out is connected with an apocalyptic notion of the "end of the world." This has prompted many an interpretation that the events narrated in other passages of the biblical text relating to the "grand finale" of the Christian cosmology would be triggered by the fulfillment of the missionary work given by Jesus Christ. By looking carefully at the *Gesta*'s treatment of the "end of the world" against this background, I believe that Adam was seeing the completion of Hamburg–Bremen's missionary work in the northern regions in relation to the apocalypse that the end of the Christian mission would usher in. This is the reason that his narrative of the *legatio gentium* in Scandinavia evokes so many images related to the idea of "end of the world," including that of the *monstra*, as well as of Gog and Magog. The historical narrative in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* has a marked apocalyptic appeal and needs to be interpreted accordingly.[133]

If this apocalyptic reasoning is true of Adam's treatment of the *monstra* and of other aspects considered by modern historiography to be "exaggerations,"[134] then it must also have at least some impact on his descriptions of paganism and its rituals. The prime example of Adam's interpretation of Scandinavian paganism is doubtless the description of the pagan temple in Uppsala, as discussed before. In this passage, almost all the elements he presents as characteristic of northern paganism come together to form a quasi-*Idealtypus* regarding paganism itself. There is a temple, idols, and sacrifices of animals and men. There are incantations, drinking rituals, and a sacred grove. The idols are of three deities that match three of the most common topoi regarding pagan gods in Christian literature: a god of war, a god of lust, and a god of nature. According to Adam, the northern pagans also worship men of old, whom they elevate to the status of deities; that is, pagan religion presents euhemeristic traits. Finally, there is also a festival occurring on a cyclic basis in which every person has to participate, and from which those already Christianized can abstain only by buying their way out. The whole image that Adam creates in this extended description seems to be too perfect and to fit too easily into a generalized idea of paganism, not to raise some doubts regarding its veracity.[135] Many scholars have thought similarly at different times and with different, sometimes opposing, results.[136]

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132 Matt. 28:20.

133 On the medieval idea of history as a salvational process stretching from creation to the apocalypse, see Goetz, *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein*.

134 For instance, by Trommer, "Komposition und Tendenz."

135 Henrik Janson has been especially sceptical. See his multiple publications on the Uppsala temple, particularly Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Janson, "Adam of Bremen and the Conversion of Scandinavia"; Janson, "What Made the Pagans Pagans?"

136 Sundqvist, *Freyr's Offspring*, 93: "Adam's description of Uppsala as a cultic site has often been subject to scrutiny." I follow here the extensive survey regarding the Uppsala temple in *Freyr's Offspring*, 117ff. Sundqvist places special emphasis on A. Hultgård, *Uppsalakulten och Adam av*

Adam of Bremen is one of the earliest writers of the Middle Ages, and certainly the first continental chronicler, to mention Uppsala, although earlier hints regarding the site are present in other sources, mostly Norse in origin, as pointed out by Olof Sundqvist.[137] Sundqvist's central thesis is that Uppsala was a central place for the Svear, where religious and political powers converged. The site was thus linked to the maintenance of social and power structures for a long period, stretching over many centuries up to, at least, the time Adam was writing. Sundqvist convincingly demonstrates the importance of the site based on evidence of economic activity, possible cultic activity, and of certain political activity too, as suggested by the presence of rulers' dwellings and of assemblies. In sum, Uppsala was probably an important place for the Svear at the time Adam composed his work, and his mention of it may be connected to his sources of information regarding Swedish territory: that is, Sven Estridsen, the king of Denmark, with whom Adam exchanged information, and Bishop Adalward the Younger, consecrated to the see at Sigtuna. Both had been to the region controlled by the Svear and are, therefore, considered probable and safe sources for Adam's account.

For this reason, most scholars are reluctant to dismiss Adam's description. As Sundqvist points out, "[t]here are no reasons to reject Adam's description of Uppsala as an old cult place. There are many details in Adam's account that harmonise with Old Norse materials and archaeological finds. It cannot have been composed from his imagination alone. Adam's text about the pagan cult fits in the classical ethnographic genre, where religion often is treated separately in one or two passages. For instance Strabo, Caesar and Tacitus follow this pattern."[138] This makes Sundqvist's work almost a direct rebuttal of the earlier study by Henrik Janson, who proposed that Adam's description of the Uppsala temple was first and foremost a reaction to the ecclesiological struggles the Hamburg–Bremen archbishopric was facing in the looming papal reform under Gregory VII. Sundqvist also opposes Carl Hallencreutz's thesis that the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* presents a historical narrative in Augustinian form, articulating the theory of the *civitates*—that is, "that Adam applied an Augustinian perspective when describing the pagan cult at Uppsala […] in which *civitas dei*, i.e. Christianity, was opposed by the paganism of Uppsala (*civitas terrena*)."[139] Sundqvist denies this, arguing that Adam's Uppsala "was not just an Augustinian *topos*."[140] It is clear that Sundqvist is particularly resistant to any attempt to interpret Adam's narrative from a linguistic, literary, or philosophical point of view, that assumes the temple to be no more than a rhetorical device. He is also keen to compare Adam's account to other sources, especially archaeological, with corroborating pieces of evidence regarding the temple site in Uppsala as described in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*.

Bremen (Nora: Nya Doxa, 1997) but unfortunately—owing to less-than-ideal research conditions in Brazil—I have been unable to access this.

137 Sundqvist, *Freyr's Offspring*, 95ff.

138 Sundqvist, *Freyr's Offspring*, 135.

139 Sundqvist, *Freyr's Offspring*, 119.

140 Sundqvist, *Freyr's Offspring*, 117.

Therein lies what could be considered a significant shortcoming in Sundqvist's analysis. This does not concern the conclusions he draws from the archaeological evidence, but rather the part that Adam's description of Uppsala plays in these conclusions. As Sundqvist states above, he regards Adam's description of the Uppsala temple as part of a wider[141] ethnographic narrative. This suggests that he approaches the text with a markedly contemporary frame of reference, which clearly does not correspond with Adam's expressed intention in composing the *Gesta*. In addition, Sundqvist's approach is problematic because it looks at the description of the Uppsala temple not as part of a major historical narrative, as it is, but as a small observation on the religious culture of the Swedes in the eleventh century, which is almost accidentally inserted into this chronicle of the archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen. Ultimately, his analysis depends on the relation between text and reality, which cannot be either confirmed or denied by looking at these chapters alone, and must take into account the wider historical–philosophical context of the *Gesta*. Considering recent advances in the knowledge and interpretation of medieval historiography, Sundqvist's position regarding Adam's account seems inadequate. Regardless of any "factual" content that it may have, Adam's description of Uppsala is an authorial construction, with multiple and complex narrative elements and conceptual layers that cannot be reduced to a transparent description of reality, much less to an ethnographic description—which it definitely is not.

Just because the description may correspond in some degree to other evidence does not, therefore, make it true. In fact, even if there were more particular coincidences between Adam's account and the findings of archaeological explorations in Gamla Uppsala, there would still not necessarily be an equivalence between the narrative and external reality. Few of us doubt today that whatever a historian writes about the past does not correspond to the past itself. It is rather an image, the imagination of the past, transformed into a narrative that has to make sense to those interacting with it and thus depends on a set of conceptions about the past that are common between the agents involved in the narrative process. As Chris Lorenz explains, the establishment of facts cannot be dissociated from the subject interpreting them. Lorenz's examples might cast light on whether Adam or his informants would be able to identify anything other than their preconceived ideas about paganism.[142] Bernd Schneidmüller's essay on the (re) interpretation of historical facts in medieval historiography and the creation of new meanings for old topoi is of key importance here.[143] In this sense, the assumption that the *Gesta* might present an image based on a long tradition associated with classical and medieval ethnographic descriptions of religious practices does not imply that Adam is simply presenting objective facts, or that he, on the contrary, has a purely allegorical

141 It is not clear how much of Adam's *Gesta* Sundqvist is referring to here. From what he says, it seems he is considering only those descriptions of Swedish territory, and especially the notes on Uppsala. There is a tradition, too, which defines the entire fourth book as ethnographic, so he may be referring to this. Either way, there is no basis on which to declare that all of Adam's work constitutes an "ethnography" in the traditional sense. Cf. note 136 above.

142 Lorenz, *Konstruktion der Vergangenheit*, 35ff.

143 Schneidmüller, "Constructing the Past."

approach to the theme of paganism among the *sueones*. Schneidmüller's example of the construction of French dynastic narratives is a good way of understanding my own position concerning Adam's Uppsala temple. According to Schneidmüller, "In central medieval France, no one regretted the historiographical distortions that were necessary for the invention of a direct dynastic line. No one condemned these distortions as falsifications; rather, they were viewed as part of a proper ordering, proper, that is, from the vantage point of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Ultimately, the view of reality came to shape reality."[144]

The fact that these narratives presented a distortion of objective reality does not mean they were seen as bold attempts at historical falsification or as simple lies. As we saw in relation to the *monstra*, such constructions followed clear principles and had recognizable objectives. The fact that they might be at odds with modern expectations concerning historical discourse is nothing more than the testimony of the contrasting worldviews that separate both epochs. They show us how the images of history (*Geschichtsbild*) held by medieval authors were different from those held by modern historians. We therefore need to shift the analytical focus from the question of how Adam's description of the temple in Uppsala matches the past realities in Sweden—a question that ultimately cannot be answered. We must consider instead why the scholar of Bremen presented this narrative of the religious culture of the *Sueones*, and how.

In the chapters that precede the description of the temple, Adam tells his readers about the populations and the territories of Sweden, including the *monstra*. In the chapters following the description, there is an account of a miracle regarding a supposed priest of the temple, who was blinded but recovered his sight after recognizing that Jesus Christ as the only true God—a familiar topos in Christian hagiography that can be traced back to the story of Paul's conversion on his way to Damascus.[145] Next, Adam writes of the bishops that Adalbert consecrated to the Swedish sees, with special emphasis on the work of Adalward the Younger, who was a bishop in Sigtuna, a place close to Uppsala. Adam tells that this bishop—who apparently was one of Adam's eyewitnesses to the situation among the *Sueones*—along with the bishop of Skåne, Egino, decided to destroy the *templum* in Uppsala. They were prevented from carrying out their plan, however, by King Stenkil, who feared that such an act would cause a rebellion.[146] With the benefit of what we have written in this chapter, it should now be clear that for Adam the point is not to describe the temple but to impress his readership. This is why he flanks the description of the temple with the *monstra* on one side and with miracles on the other. He does not intend to inform, but to make a point about the archdiocese of Hamburg–Bremen and its *legatio gentium*.

Uppsala is placed *in medio Sueonia*,[147] and yet in Adam's eyes is close to the "end of the world." This has an impact on how the text should be read. Taken as a whole, Adam's

144 Schneidmüller, "Constructing the Past," 171–72.

145 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 260–61 (bk. IV, ch. 28).

146 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 261–63 (bk. IV, ch. 30).

147 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 118 (bk. II, ch. 58).

historical narrative is linked to the Augustinian philosophy of history, and its traces are present throughout the text.[148] Taking this into account, I believe the influence on the *Gesta* of the philosophy of history developed by Augustine, and especially its appropriation by Orosius in the *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, must be seen as much greater than it has been so far. Adopting this Augustinian–Orosian concept, Adam's history looks into the past from the creation (of the diocese) until his own days, and he hints at an expected future when he insists on the Christianization of the Scandinavians and the *legatio gentium*. Thus, when discussing events past and present in light of the general concept of opposition between Christians and non-Christians, his conception of history is connected to both these church fathers. It is also, however, tied up with the idea of a sure end for this struggle and the final victory of Christianity. It is against this background that the passage of the temple in Uppsala must be read and interpreted.

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At the beginning of this chapter, I stated that the aim of this study into the paganism presented in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* was not to verify it against a "reality" found outside the historical narrative, but to understand how and why Adam placed these descriptions in his work. He mentions paganism recurrently in his account, but he gives almost no definition and very few broader descriptions or explanations. The key passages can be located at three foundational moments in the narrative and have been much explored by different scholars, with different results. Most of these studies have been concerned with establishing how true or close to reality the descriptions presented by the chronicler are, and their conclusions vary from those that confirm Adam's veracity, to those that dismiss any claim to truthfulness. And yet, very few of these studies have started from an understanding of the internal logic of the *Gesta* as a historical narrative that asserts the prerogatives of Hamburg–Bremen over the Christianization of Scandinavia. Henrik Janson's analysis of the temple at Uppsala is a much-needed exception to this rule, even if his conclusions are very narrowly conceived in their attachment to the political landscape of the late eleventh century. Volker Scior and David Fraesdorff also offer interesting perspectives that centre on Adam's conception and identity formation in the historical account. However, neither scholar proposes a general interpretation of the paganism in the *Gesta*, and rather approach this element as it connects to questions raised by their particular studies. This previous scholarship has nonetheless provided important steps to the hypothesis I am offering.

When writing about paganism, Adam of Bremen does not seek to investigate and describe the religious culture and ritual practices of the communities he depicts in his account. His treatment of paganism in itself should be enough to make this apparent, since he bases his observations on classical topoi, as Janson has extensively demonstrated.[149]

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148 Cf. Sundqvist, *Freyr's Offspring*, 119, as discussed above. Hallencreutz earlier pointed in this direction in *Adam Bremensis and Sueonia* by showing the structural opposition between the descriptions of pagan temples and episcopal sees, even if he did not explicitly discuss these phenomena as being of an Augustinian origin.

149 Most recently in Janson, "Pictured by the Other."

As I have argued, Adam sets out to establish a general picture of what he and his readers should understand as paganism, by presenting the religious practices of the Saxons, which he openly borrows from the *Gesta Saxonum* and ultimately goes back to Tacitus's *Germania*. From this starting point, he constructs an image of paganism that can be transported and applied over other communities with small variations, which should not be understood as responses to external or real situations, but to literary and narrative demands the author puts on himself. The number of *scholia* attributed to Adam as revisions, expansions and commentaries that he intended to include in his work is proof of how demanding he could be. These variations are also attached to classical models, especially those established by biblical and patristic traditions, as well as early medieval tradition, as Janson has argued.[150]

However, Adam openly expresses his disdain and lack of interest in the characteristics—above all religious—of the *gentes* he covers in his account: "As it seems useless, in my judgment, to scrutinize the doings of those who did not believe, so it is impious to pass over the deliverance of those who first believed and to leave unmentioned those through whom they did believe."[151] It seems quite clear that for him—that is, in his own particular opinion and not a generalized assertion—the *acta* of the pagans are unworthy of mention, or, at best, should only be mentioned precisely when they elevate the achievements of the archdiocese and its leaders. We can see this in his presentation of Saxon paganism, which is attached to the Christianization of the Saxons by Charlemagne and the founding of the dioceses of Hamburg and Bremen. It is apparent, too, in the way in which Adam deals with the temples in Rethra and Uppsala, as well as in his treatment of Olaf Tryggvason.[152] Paganism in Adam of Bremen's account is not a description of real situations or cultural structures; it is, rather, a construction inside a historical narrative with very clear functions and goals, as expressed by the author himself.

And yet, establishing that Adam created his descriptions of paganism in pursuit of very specific goals—goals that I believe are connected to his conception of history itself—does not mean that we should disregard them. On the contrary, admitting that what Adam presents to us is a construction of paganism in his historical narrative should change our perspectives when approaching the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* and cause us to ask new questions. Why did Adam insert these descriptions of paganism into his work? And, since it now seems clear there is no ethnographic value to them, why did he write them in such a way? If we approach from this position, we move away from the barren search for the accuracy or otherwise of Adam's descriptions, and instead open ourselves

150 Janson, "Pictured by the Other".

151 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 52. "Meo autem arbitratu, sicut inutile videtur eorum acta scrutari, qui non crediderunt, ita impium est preterire salutem eorum, qui primum erediderunt, et per quos crediderunt." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 59 (bk. I, ch. 61). The alternate reading in the C-class manuscripts is an important hint as to the interpretation of this passage in the Middle Ages. It reads: "Sicut enim inutile est acta non credentium scrutari". It omits Adam's carefulness expressed in "Meo autem arbitratu" and makes the chronicler's opinion into a general statement.

152 Janson has also pointed in this direction; for example, "What Made the Pagans Pagans?"

to the much more significant question of why their inclusion was fundamental for his historical argument. Doing this, we come closer to Adam's own perspectives regarding history and turn away from the unsolvable comparison with an imagined past. Adam of Bremen does not seek to inform but to impress, and our job should be to investigate this rather than to go about searching for a given reality, external to his creations.

Chapter 2

THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANIZATION

ADAM OF BREMEN'S connection to the missionary activities of his archdiocese and his defence of the primacy of its mission to convert peoples to Christianity, the *legatio gentium*, has long been identified as the central theme in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. Aage Trommer had already demonstrated in the 1950s the centrality of the *legatio* in the selection and in the reshaping of Adam's source material, especially his use of the *Vita Anskarii* to highlight Hamburg–Bremen's position in the north.[1] Volker Scior, writing fifty years later, concluded that Adam wrote his chronicle as a response to a crisis, when the rights of the archdiocese over the territories in northern and northeastern Europe were being widely questioned and seemed no more than a vague prerogative.[2] For Scior, it is as a result of such circumstances that Adam set out to write his history of the archbishopric, in the hopes of attracting Liemar's attention to the *legatio gentium*.[3] This Adam considered fundamental, not only as a defence of Hamburg–Bremen's contested position, but also as a statement regarding the importance of the see in a historical–philosophical perspective. Therefore, when reading the *Gesta*, we need to consider how the text connects and sustains a defence of this *legatio* in the face of the historical events it narrates. Indeed, a clear understanding of this prerogative was fundamental for the audience for whom Adam wrote, and the fact that he does not spend much time developing the concept may indicate that he assumes his readers are familiar with it.

The *legatio gentium* is interpreted mainly as a prerogative to Christianize the *gentes*, that is, the different populations living outside *christianitas*, the imagined community that unites Christian believers. It is, therefore, no surprise that the *legatio* has been translated by modern historiography into the concept of mission or missionary activity. However, as Ian Wood recently pointed out, "[m]ission is an early modern concept."[4] And yet, as Wood also states, "[t]his does not mean that the term would have no relevance to the study of the early Middle Ages, but that the historian should carefully define his area of research."[5] In this work here, I follow the generally accepted practice, but

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1 Trommer, "Komposition und Tendenz."

2 Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, 36: "Die Missionszuständigkeit Hamburg–Bremens für weite Gebiete im Norden und Nordosten Europas war zur Abfassungszeit vehement umstritten und glich daher kaum noch mehr als einem Anspruch. Nicht zuletzt aus diesem Grund thematisiert Adam immer wieder auch für seine Gegenwart das (seinerzeit eben infrage gestellte) Recht des Hamburger Erzbischofs auf Bischofsweihen in den skandinavischen Gebieten."

3 Liemar is the archbishop to whom Adam dedicates the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. See above p. 5???

4 Wood, "What Is a Mission?," 135.

5 Wood, "Hagiographie und Mission," 121: "Dies bedeutet nicht, dass der Begriff für das Studium

with some reservations, trying to refer to the *legatio gentium* as little as possible in the sense of missionary work, since it was but one of the aspects of Hamburg–Bremen's prerogatives regarding the Scandinavian and Slavic territories. Still, in this chapter, with its theme of Christianization and therefore of mission as one of the expressions of this process of expansion, the term will be brought up more often.

Christian expansion is central to Adam's narrative. Based on his own declarations in the prologue to the *Gesta*, he intends to highlight the archbishopric's position in the ecclesiastical landscape of the eleventh century by creating a historiographical narrative of the successes of Hamburg–Bremen and its archbishops, especially regarding the Scandinavian and Slavic communities. Expressions like "the ancient and honorable prerogatives of [the] Church"[6] and "the many achievements of [Archbishop Liemar's] predecessors"[7] point to the importance Adam assigns to the historical character of his defence of the archbishopric. It is, therefore, no surprise that a fundamental aspect of his narrative is the establishment of the foundational moments of the *legatio gentium* and the activities of the missionary-archbishops. The questions of "when?" and "who?" are of primary significance here. In this chapter, I am going to focus on these questions.

Most studies that look into the Christianization of Scandinavia and the Saxon homeland directly north of the Elbe ("Nordalbingia") present the expeditions of Ansgar, the first archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen,[8] as the foundation of missionary activity there.[9] There is, however, evidence that points to even earlier efforts: the activities of Willibrord, the apostle to the Frisians, and Ebo of Reims, who preached among the Danes. According to Anders Winroth, "[t]he first missionary known to have gone to Scandinavia was Archbishop Ebo of Rheims, who went to Denmark in 823."[10] This agrees with Adam's account in the *Gesta*. In the fifteenth chapter of the first book, Adam writes that "[i]t is written that at that time Ebbo of Rheims, […] received with Halitgar from Pope Paschal a legateship to the heathen, which commission our Ansgar with the help of divine grace later happily carried out."[11] However, Winroth also recognizes that "[w]e

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des Frühmittelalters keine Relevanz hätte, wohl aber, dass der Historiker sein Forschungsgebiet mit Sorgfalt definieren sollte."

6 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 3.

7 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 3.

8 This is questioned by Knibbs, *Ansgar, Rimbert*. However, Henrik Janson ("Ansgar und die frühe Geschichte") recently objected to Knibbs's analysis.

9 For example Brink, "Christianisation and the Emergence of the Early Church in Scandinavia," 623: "A central figure in the traditional historiography of the Christianisation of Scandinavia is Ansgar, the first archbishop in Hamburg–Bremen's archdiocese." And Søvsø, "Ansgars Kirche in Ribe," 245: "Nach wenigen und dazu missglückten Missionsversuchen im 8. Jahrhundert gelang unter dem Missionar Ansgar der erste Durchbruch des christlichen Glaubens im Norden."

10 Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia*, 105.

11 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 21. "In diebus illis scribitur, quod Ebo Remensis, cum de salute gentium religionis studio ferveret, legationem ad gentes cum Halitgario suscepit a Pascali papa, quam postea noster Anscarius divina opitulante gratia feliciter peregit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 20–21 (bk. I, ch. 15).

know very little about the details of Ebo's mission, for the sources do not tell us much."[12] The reason for this, he argues, is because of the later *Life* of Ansgar. The *Vita Anskarii*, written by Ansgar's successor Rimbert at the end of the ninth century, was very successful in creating an image of its subject as being devoted to his missionary role. This textual emphasis was necessary to obfuscate the fact that Ansgar and Rimbert had forged multiple documents in an attempt to secure the foundation of Hamburg as a joint archbishopric together with Bremen, at a time when its position was being questioned by the archbishopric of Cologne, to which Bremen belonged before. Ebo, on the other hand, had by then fallen from imperial grace and had lost any supporters who might have wanted to record his activities in Danish territory.[13]

Adam of Bremen may thus have been influenced by Rimbert in those parts of the *Gesta* that deal with the beginning of the Christianization of Scandinavia under Ebo and Halitgar. Alternatively, his possibly biased account of Ebo's achievements may instead reflect the internal logic of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* and Adam's own reflections on the role of the archbishopric in history. In other words, it may not be an attempt to minimize other endeavours in the Christianization of the Danes, as is implied by Winroth. Looking at the text can supply us with an answer. At the beginning of the same chapter that narrates Ebo and Halitgar's pioneering work among the Danes, Adam tells his readers that Louis the Pious overlooked the wishes of his predecessor, Charlemagne. Instead of founding the see in Hamburg to promote the Christianization of the northern *gentes*, Louis designated the territory beyond the Elbe to be under the custody of the dioceses of Bremen and Verden.[14] Therefore, when writing about Ebo's missionary efforts, Adam must have had in mind this deviation from an imagined "right" path for the Christianization of the north, a path that was necessarily attached to Hamburg as the point from which all such activities radiated outwards. This trajectory of the early missionary efforts thus clashed with his broader interpretation of history. Ebo and Halitgar's efforts did not flourish, not because there was no information in Adam's sources about their successes—which may also be true—but primarily because neither of these missionaries had a direct connection to the history of Hamburg.

Taking this relationship with Hamburg's ascribed role as the outwardly radiating centre for the Christianization of the *gentiles* as a starting point for the interpretation of history, may also help us comprehend Adam's decision to begin his account by narrating the events concerning the Saxons and their Christianization by Charlemagne. Adam clearly seeks to associate the archdiocese and its missionary vocation with the figure of the Frankish emperor, reporting Charlemagne's intention to found it as a see for the spreading of Christianity beyond the Elbe. By doing this, Adam plans to further secure the legitimacy of the claims laid by the archbishops of their primacy regarding the spread of ecclesiastical organization across the northern territories. Attempts to promote Christianity that could not be interpreted as starting from this original design

12 Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia*, 105.

13 Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia*, 105ff.

14 "Ludewicus voluntatem patris oblitus provinciam Transalbianam Bremensi et Ferdensi episcopis commendavit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 20 (bk. I, ch. 15).

therefore had to be shown as failed attempts. In sum: for Adam, the legitimacy of Hamburg lies partly in Charlemagne's plans to make it the see for the Christianization of the north, an imprimatur that virtually ensures the success of this missionary enterprise. Conversely, activities not undertaken in accordance with this premise are in effect doomed to failure. There is almost no chance of them bringing long-lasting accomplishments. This is the case with Ebo of Reims and Halitgar of Cambrai.

The Christianization of the Saxons under Charlemagne's reign seems to set a standard for the spread of Christianity to new populations, with some caveats. As I will show later, Adam of Bremen is not fond of the idea of conversion by force, a disapproval that is in accord with the theology on which he bases much of his historical narrative. However, he also seems interested in the support of strong rulers for the missionary effort. It is in this context that we must read Adam's account of the missionary activities of Winfried Bonifatius and the Christianization of *Germania*.

After giving his readers information about the paganism practised among the Saxons prior to their conquest and Christianization by Charlemagne, Adam states that this must be followed by an account of "[h]ow the rude Saxon folk came to a knowledge of God's name or from what preachers it received the precepts of the Christian religion."[15] This introduces the short passage praising the deeds of Winfried Bonifatius and his role in proselytizing among the German populations. Adam knows that Boniface's missionary activities took place before the reign of Charlemagne, but he seems to imply a connection between both figures by linking the Christianization of the Saxons with his account of Saint Boniface's preaching in the *australes Germaniae partes*.[16] Boniface is responsible for the Christianization of the Thuringians and Hessians and becomes a martyr while preaching among the Frisians, who—according to Adam in the *Gesta*—were partly under the ecclesiastical rule of the Bremen diocese.

This imagined connection of Bremen with Boniface is very significant to the *Gesta*'s historical argument and its assertion of the archdiocese's missionary vocation. But let's return to the key passage, already quoted above: "[h]ow the rude Saxon folk came to a knowledge of God's name or from what preachers it received the precepts of the Christian religion."[17] There is a subtlety in the Latin text which is not apparent in Francis Tschan's otherwise solid translation. Adam writes that his account of Saxon paganism and Charlemagne's wars against the Saxons demands an explanation of how they came to knowledge of the heavenly name (*ad cognitionem divini nominis*), or (*aut*) by which preachers they were taught the rules of the Christian religion, that is, the orthodoxy (*ad christianae religionis normam pertinxerit*.)[18] It seems, by this statement, that Adam

15 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 11. "Qualiter autem gens dura Saxonum pervenerit ad cognitionem divini nominis aut quibus predicatoribus ad christianae religionis normam pertinxerit, explicare locus quaerit" Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk. I, ch. 8).

16 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 10 (bk. I, ch. 10).

17 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 11. "Qualiter autem gens dura Saxonum pervenerit ad cognitionem divini nominis aut quibus predicatoribus ad christianae religionis normam pertinxerit, explicare locus quaerit" Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk I, ch. 8).

18 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 9 (bk I, ch. 8). Compare this meaning of the term with the

recognizes two stages in the conversion of the Saxons: one, the acceptance of the basic Christian message, which is understood through knowledge of the heavenly name, that is, Christ; and two, the transformation of heterodox practices into the rules of the Christian religion, orthodoxy. Furthermore, Adam writes that even if other preachers worked among the *Germani*, it was Winfried Bonifatius who perfected their work and accomplished a "true" Christianization of these peoples.[19]

Thus, Adam creates a useful standard for his defence of the pioneering work of Ansgar among the Scandinavians. Within the *Gesta*, the first archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen should be interpreted in light of the example set by Boniface and should be held to be the true beginner of the conversion, even if there were others who tried before him, as Adam admits. The model of Saint Boniface is also useful because it is very malleable and therefore applicable to the very diverse contexts of Christianization in Scandinavia as against the Slavic territories. Since, for Adam, the process is varied—it can be either the first contact with the Christian message or the establishment of Christian orthodoxy—he can easily adapt his narrative to show Hamburg's involvement in every major success regarding the spread of Christianity and, through this, reaffirm the archdiocese's leading role in the process. Adam is well aware of this and in the *Gesta* he frequently uses this ambiguity to his advantage.

The passage above, where Adam indicates that Ebo and Halitgar received a mandate for the Christianization of the northern populations, which was later accomplished by Ansgar, is just the first example. The parallel to the account of Boniface is evident. Both Ebo and Halitgar started the missionary work, but only Ansgar was successful in perfecting it by heavenly grace (*divina opitulante gratia feliciter peregit*).[20] This shows how Adam plays with the different possibilities in his account of the Christianization process. The same theme is presented later in the *Gesta*. When describing the first of Ansgar's successes among the Swedes, Adam refers to him as the apostle of two peoples—*apostolus duarum gentium*—who perfected (*perfecisse*) the work that Willibrord and Ebo of Reims had tried to accomplish before him.[21] Again, it seems that Boniface sets the

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following passage from a letter from Fulco of Reims to the Anglo-Saxon king Alfred, dated about 885: "Ac successu temporis crescente religione Christiana, sancta Ecclesia his contenta esse nec voluit nec debuit: sed sumpta forma ab ipsis Apostolis magistris et fundatoribus suisqui post Evangelicam doctrinam ab ipso cœlesti magistro propagatam atque diffusam, non superfluum et inutile sed commodum et salubre duxerunt suarum epistolarum crebris commonitionibus fideles perfectius instituere, et in vera fide solidius confirmare; tramitemque vivendi et normam religionis eis abundantius contradere." From Fulco of Reims, "Epistola Fulconis ad Ælfredum regem," in *Cartularium Saxonicum*, 2:191.

19 "Et quamvis alii scriptorum vel Gallum in Alemannia vel Hemmerannum in Baioaria sive Kylianum in Francia seu certe Willebrordum in Fresia priores verbum Dei asserant predicasse, hic tamen omnes alios, uti Paulus apostolus, studio ac predicationis labore antevenit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 10–11 (bk. I, ch. 10).

20 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 21 (bk I, ch. 15).

21 "Et o mira omnipotentis Dei providentia de vocatione gentium, quam disponit artifex ut vult, et quando vult, et per quem vult! Ecce quod longo prius tempore Willebrordum, item alios et Ebonem voluisse legimus nec potuisse, nunc Ansgarium nostrum et voluisse et perfecisse miramur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 22 (bk. I, ch. 15).

standards against which the chronicler measures his champion, for Boniface also missionized among two peoples, the Thuringians and the Hessians.

Taking these two passages into account, we might be facing an attempt by Adam not only to connect Ansgar and Boniface, but also to promote idea that the first preaching must be supplemented by the spread of Christian orthodoxy and of the ecclesiastical organization that ensures it. Adam also writes that Saint Boniface had brought light into *Germania* through (the building of) churches, teaching, and (the example of) virtues.[22] If our interpretation is correct, then we might assume that here Adam is presenting another set of elements connected to his conceptions regarding Christianization beyond the Elbe. Simple preaching does not seem to be enough to secure the presence of Christianity among the Scandinavians and Slavs. Only the combination of the proclamation of the gospel together with the establishment of more permanent structures of ecclesiastical culture can guarantee that a given *gens* changes their religious practice, moving from whatever they did before Christianity—which in Adam's views was undoubtedly pagan—to the practice of Christian orthodoxy. I will return to this second element—orthodoxy—in a later chapter.

According to Adam's narrative of the missionary activities among the pagans living beyond the natural border presented by the Elbe, only through preaching and the founding of an ecclesiastical structure by Ansgar could Christianity take root in these regions. This is the reason why he places the successes of the first archbishop of Hamburg above those of the earlier missionaries. There is certainly a clear bias in the chronicler's account in favour of the sainted archbishop, but it derives from Adam's conceptions regarding the Christianization of the pagan north. It is not simply a piece of political propaganda for the prerogatives of the archdiocese, but also an explanation of Adam's views on the historical process itself. Although Ebo of Reims, Halitgar of Cambrai, and Willibrord all sought the Christianization of the northern populations, Adam only mentions the creation of an ecclesiastical structure under the impetus of Ansgar's missions. He emphasizes this recurrently, mentioning how the archbishops of Hamburg sought to expand the church network in the newly Christianized territories and how they appointed priests and bishops to the parishes in Slavic and Scandinavian regions, something that he declines to acknowledge other missionaries also did.

For Adam, Ansgar thus plays a central role in the historical narrative. He not only prompted the foundation of the (arch)diocese of Hamburg,[23] but also the archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen, and many churches, parishes, and monasteries, including those

22 "Ipse enim, ut in Gestis suis legitur, apostolicae sedis auctoritate fultus legationem ad gentes suscepit Teutonumque populos , apud quos nunc et summa imperii Romani et divini cultus reverentia viget ac floret, ecclesiis, doctrina virtutibusque illustravit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 11 (bk. I, ch. 10). I do not follow Tschan's translation in this passage. His reading of the *ecclesiis, doctrina virtutibusque* phrase as connected to *viget ac floret* instead of *illustravit* makes less sense when assuming the punctuation in Schmeidler's edition is correct. Therefore, I interpret this passage as *illustravit* by means of *ecclesiis* and so on, that is, as an ablative of manner. It also completes the meaning of the verb *illustravit*.

23 For discussion of whether Hamburg was a diocese or an archdiocese, see Janson, "Ansgar und die frühe Geschichte."

in Swedish and Danish territories. As Adam writes in his *Gesta*, after receiving his see in Hamburg, Ansgar was concerned with the growth of his Church, which was a sign of his care for the *legatio*. "In those days our holy father Ansgar vigorously administered the mission entrusted to him, [...] fostering the Church by word of mouth and work of hand."[24] The imagery of the words and the works of Ansgar point to the aforementioned characteristics of Boniface teaching the *doctrina* and promoting the religion *ecclesiis virtutibusque*. Ansgar's preoccupation with the building of churches can be identified especially after the destruction of Hamburg in 845. The foundation of a cloister in Ramelsloh appears as the first significant work of this type and seems to mark a new phase in Ansgar's missionary politics. Ramelsloh becomes a centre for his missionary efforts towards the Danish, Swedish, and Nordalbingian populations. The description presented by Adam shows an archbishop concerned with the pastoral care of his religious flock, as well as with the preservation of his diocese's symbolic power through the promotion of the cult of relics.[25]

Slowly, it starts to become clear that Adam is proposing that Ansgar, as the first archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen, should be interpreted as possessing the "ideal type" traits related to the figure of a missionary bishop. His model by which to measure and advance Ansgar's perfection in this role is clearly Boniface, but is adapted to conform to the (by Adam's time) established view of the archdiocese's saintly founder. This has, in turn, relevance for Adam's historical conceptions, if we assume he is interpreting events in light of an Augustinian–Orosian philosophy. Seen in this light, Ansgar's work is not only measured against the successes of Boniface among the *Germani*, but is presented as a quasi continuation, extending it further to the north, up to the ends of the Earth. For this reading, the extension of the territory over which the archdiocese exerts influence had to be stretched as far into the northern regions as possible—that is, as far as the community founded by Ansgar in Birka.

In the narrative of the first years of the missionary activity connected to the Hamburg archbishopric, the town (*oppidum*) of Birka is given a symbolic role. According to the *Vita Anskarii*, written by Rimbert shortly after Ansgar's death, Ansgar had been to Sweden twice, where he reportedly founded a Christian community at the location called Birka, which Rimbert calls a *portum* and a *vico*, that is, a small village or probably a trading harbour.[26] At the time of his first visit, Ansgar was only a preaching monk; alongside Archbishop Ebo of Reims he had received the *legatio* to spread the Christian religion. Only after his return was Ansgar elevated to the position of archbishop of Ham-

24 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 25–26. "In diebus illis sanctus pater noster Ansgarius legationem sibi creditam viriliter executus apud Hammaburg novellae plantationi insudavit, doctrina oris et opere manuum exercens ecclesiam." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 26 (bk. I, ch. 20).

25 Regarding this element during the northern expansion of Christianity, see Röckelein, "Reliquientranslationen nach Sachsen."

26 For example, Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, ed. Waitz, 32 (ch. 11): "ad portum regni ipsorum, qui Birca dicitur, pervenerunt," and Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, ed. Waitz, 58 (ch. 27): "Deinde cum dies placiti advenisset, quod in praedicto vico Byrca habitum est, sicut ipsorum est consuetudo, praeconis voce rex, quae esset eorum legatio, intimari fecit populo."

burg, when Louis decided to found the archdiocese in 834. This may explain why Adam omits to mention that as a result of Ansgar's preaching, the *praefectus* of Birka, Herigar, adopted Christianity and on his own property built the first church in Swedish territory. Instead, Adam simply points out that Herigar became famous for his virtues and the miracles he performed.[27]

Adam's decision to disregard the information concerning the building of a church by Herigar may not be accidental. Indeed, he seems to have deliberately withheld it in order to produce an account that aligned with his general concept—that successful Christianization in Scandinavia was directly related to the orchestrations of the archbishops, especially as regards the establishment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy led by the diocese of Hamburg. If we take Henrik Janson's hypothesis into account here,[28] the picture becomes even clearer, although more complex. Adam may not only have been concerned with establishing a broader picture of the phases of Christianization as a sequence between evangelization and the formation of an ecclesiastical structure. He may also have wanted to avoid propagating positive examples of autonomous action by Swedish political agents in founding religious communities in their own territories, in a movement independent of Hamburg's endorsement.

For these reasons, Adam mentions the construction of a church in Birka only in the second visit Ansgar pays to the Swedish trading place. The narrative the chronicler presents in the twenty-sixth chapter of his *Gesta* is revealing. A little earlier, he reported the expulsion of Bishop Gauzbert of Sweden and the martyrdom of the chaplain Nithard, along with the resulting seven-year absence from Swedish territory of any Christian priest.[29] Adam further implies that Gauzbert had lost interest in the Christianization of the north after his expulsion, and thus, in a sense, forfeited his rights to the *legatio gentium* which he had inherited from his uncle, Ebo of Reims.[30] Even though the account

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27 Compare these two passages: "Inter quos etiam praefectus vici ipsius et consiliarius regis admodum illi amabilis Herigarius nomine sacri baptismatis donum suscepit atque in fide catholica firmissimus extitit. Ipse namque in hereditate sua non multo post ecclesiam fabricavit et in Dei servitio semet ipsum religiosissime exercuit" (Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, ed. Waitz, 32 (ch. 11)); and "In quibus Herigarium, Bircae oppidi prefectum, quem tradunt etiam miraculis et virtutibus insignem" (Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 22 (bk. I, ch. 15)).

28 According to Janson, "Adam of Bremen and the Conversion of Scandinavia"; Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*.

29 "Tunc quoque Gaudbertus episcopus zelo gentilium a Sueonia depulsus, et Nithardus, capellanus eius, martyrio coronatus est cum aliis; et exinde Sueonia septennio caruit sacerdotali presentia." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 27 (bk. I, ch. 21).

30 Adam modifies the information found in the *Vita Anskarii* to better fit his own conceptions. He writes: "In adiutorium predicationis datus est ei Ebo Remensis, de quo antea diximus. Hic seu fatigatione itineris sive corporis debilitate impeditus, sive potius occupatione seculi delectatus vicarium pro se dedit Ansgario nepotem Gaudbertum. Quem ipsi ambo consecrantes episcopum vocaverunt [eum] Symonem, eumque divinae gratiae commendatum in Sueoniam miserunt." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 24 (bk. I, ch. 17). Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, ed. Waitz, 36 (ch. 14), on the other hand, says: "Cum consensu itaque et voluntate praedicti imperatoris venerabilis Ebo quendam propinquum suum Gauzbertum nomine ad hoc opus electum et pontificali insignitum honore ad partes direxit Sueonum. […] Eumque quasi vice sua, qui idem praedicandi officium prius

creates an expectation regarding Gauzbert's return to, or at least some care towards, the Christians living in Sweden—he had been appointed as a bishop for that region—it is Ansgar that takes the initiative and sends a hermit to live among Christians, possibly in Birka.[31] Comparing both the *Vita Anskarii* and the *Gesta Hammaburgenensis* makes very clear the different perspective Adam adopted. While Rimbert tries to show Ansgar's concern regarding the situation in Birka in light of his personal connection to the *praefectus*, Adam shows an archbishop concerned primarily with the maintenance of the institutional presence of the Church in Sweden. According to the *Gesta*, Ansgar sent Ardgar to Sweden in order to keep the *legatio gentium* alive and, thus, to secure Hamburg–Bremen's presence among the pagans.

This view is reinforced by Adam later on in his account. He writes that Ansgar "counseled with Bishop Gauzbert as to which of them should for the sake of Christ undergo the praiseworthy hazard. But the latter of his own accord declined the perilous enterprise, saying that he would rather have Ansgar go."[32] By refusing to participate in the missionary endeavour, the elected bishop of Sweden supposedly denied his duty regarding the *legatio gentium*. Ansgar thus took this duty upon himself alone, as Adam portrays it, and started his second journey to Birka. It is during this second visit that Adam mentions the construction of the first church in Swedish territory. This is significant because it implies that the establishment of an ecclesiastical organization in Sweden was only possible when the competition between Ansgar, representing Hamburg–Bremen, and the competing lineage of Ebo of Reims, was eliminated.

After outlining Ansgar's success in Sweden (an outline that secures Hamburg–Bremen's claims regarding its ecclesiastical prerogatives as archbishopric of the entire northern region), Adam inserts a short digression in which he advances the idea that, through the Christianization of the Swedes in Birka, the prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gog and Magog has been fulfilled. According to the Bible, Gog was an adversary of Israel and would be involved in the events leading to the end of time. In the book of the prophet Ezekiel, Gog is located in the north, and will descend with many peoples over Israel and attack it. A significant passage in the prophecy states that this attack will occur so that

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auctoritate apostolica suscepit, legatum in gentibus Sueonum esse constituit. […] Praedictus itaque Gauzbertus, quem ipsi consecrantes honore apostolici nominis Symonem vocaverunt, ad partes veniens Sueonum, honorifice et a rege et a populo susceptus est, coepitque cum benivolentia et unanimitate omnium ecclesiam inibi fabricare et publice euangelium fidei praedicare."

31 "Tum quoque ne legatio gentium sua quapiam tarditate frigesceret, predicatores misit in Daniam; Hartgarium vero heremitam direxit in Sueoniam." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 30 (bk. I, ch. 23). Compare with the *Vita Anskarii*: "Post haec itaque locus ille septem fere annis sine sacerdotali fuit praesentia. Pro qua re dominus et pastor noster Anskarius nimio merore anxius, christianae religionis fidem ibi coeptam perire non sufferens, et maxime filiolo suo, quem supra memoravimus, Herigario condolens, quendam anachoretam Ardgarium nomine illas in partes direxit et ut specialius eidem adhaereret praecepit." Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, ed. Waitz, 39 (ch. 19).

32 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 30. "Sanctus Dei pro gente Sueonum aestuare cepisset, cum Gaudberto episcopo consilium habuit, quis eorum laudabile pro Christo periculum subiret. At ille periculum sponte declinans Ansgarium potius, ut iret, rogavit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 31 (bk. I, ch. 26).

the *gentes* come to know the Jewish(–Christian) God: "In days to come, Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I am proved holy through you before their eyes."[33] The imagery presented by this biblical prophecy seems to fit quite nicely in the context in which the missionary activities of Hamburg–Bremen took part, especially if we consider that Christian theology identified the *εκκλησιαν* (ecclesia) built on the founding rock—that is, Peter—with the chosen people of the Old Testament tradition. Writing after the intense raiding activity of the Nordic *gentes* had waned, and in connection with the expansion of Christianity to the edge of the known world, Adam of Bremen could easily see this as the triumph of the Christian God over Gog.

Adam's reference to the prophecy of Ezekiel undoubtedly brings the eschatological perspective of his historical narrative into focus. As such, a connection with an Augustinian–Orosian approach to history appears to be probable, or even certain. This being so, a whole new set of possibilities for the interpretation of the *Gesta* is opened up, which should enhance our understanding of the many elements Adam brings to bear in his historiographical narrative. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Adam is not aiming for an ethnographic or anthropological description of the north and its *gentes*. Rather, he is trying to impress his readers and to hint at the forthcoming "end of the world." This is underlined by his treatment of Ansgar's success as the fulfillment of Ezekiel's Old Testament apocalyptic prophecy concerning the mythical Gog, an entity from the north.

In the thirty-third chapter of the first book, Adam summarizes the character and activities of the first archbishop of Hamburg, both as the caretaker in his Church and as a missionary abroad. At the same time, he sets this as a standard against which all the following occupants of the archiepiscopal seat will be measured. As Adam writes, "[i]n the meanwhile, ransoming captives, encouraging those in tribulation, instructing his own people at home, evangelizing the barbarians, the blessed Ansgar, […] was, as we read, never idle. He was solicitous not only as to how his own people lived but also as to how others did. […] He also addressed himself frequently to the kings of the Romans in behalf of his mission, and to the kings of the Danes in behalf of the Christian faith."[34] Here Adam clearly presents a kind of program to be followed by subsequent archbishops. This informs his readers of his view of an ideal missionary bishop, involved with the spread of Christianity among the pagans as well as with pastoral care and the teaching of orthodoxy among his own flock. These elements are also present in the figure of Winfried Bonifatius, whom I believe serves as a model for Adam's depiction of Ansgar in his historical narrative. Finally, this narrative connection between the characterization of both missionaries points to Adam's effort to stress Ansgar's sanctity as being based upon the same qualities as embodied by Saint Boniface.

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33 Ezek. 38:16.

34 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 34. "Interea beatus Ansgarius captivos redimendo, tribulatos refovendo, erudiendo domesticos, barbaris euangelizando, foris apostolus, intus monachus, nunquam legitur ociosus. Nec solum erga suos, verum et alios sollicitus, quomodo viverent; episcopos etiam tam voce quam litteris, ut vigilarent supra dominicum gregem, hos arguit, illos obsecravit. At vero regibus Romanorum pro sua legatione, regibus Danorum pro christiana fide crebro mandavit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 37 (bk. I, ch. 33).

The quotation of a letter of Ansgar's at the close of this chapter in the *Gesta* further points to Adam's eschatological interpretation of the missionary activities beyond the River Elbe. In this letter, Ansgar reaffirms his success in spreading Christianity among the Swedes and the Danes, stating that among both these peoples the foundations for the Church of Christ have been laid—*fundata est ecclesia Christi*—and that priests can carry out their office unhindered. He closes his letter by calling on his addressees to support his work and thus participate in God's glory: "May the omnipotent God make you all with pious benevolence participators in this work and joint heirs with Christ, in heavenly glory."[35] This somewhat formulaic closing remark of Ansgar's fits Adam's conception of the history of the archbishopric as an eschatologically oriented history of the spread of Christianity to the ends of the world. The foundations of the Church in those faraway regions have already been set, and with the support of the other bishops of the Empire—instead of their objections and efforts to undermine the primacy of Hamburg–Bremen over the north—there is a true chance to fulfill Christ's commission as delivered in Matthew's gospel. (Included in these episcopal objections there may be an implied confrontation with the papacy, as Janson suggests.) This interpretation is indicated by Adam's decision to emphasize this particular excerpt from Ansgar's letter. He deliberately selected this passage, which refers to heavenly glory in connection with the support of Ansgar's mission to the Danes and Swedes.

Ansgar is certainly a key figure in the narrative of the northern missionary activities of the archdiocese, but he is not the only archbishop Adam mentions in order to sustain his claims of exclusivity regarding the *legatio gentium*. On the contrary, Adam highlights the fact that the pope's commission to Ansgar was extended to his successors and that these successors carried out the inherited task, keeping the missionary effort alive and never forfeiting this right by inactivity, as Adam implies was the case with Gauzbert and the lineage of Ebo. Indeed, a *legatio* was a right attached to a person, the agent responsible for the mandate, rather than the institution to which this agent came from, especially in the case of Ansgar, since he first received the *legatio gentium* even before he was appointed as archbishop and thus the connection between Ansgar's mission and his office was very thin. Even the confirmation of the *legatio* and the attachment of it to the archbishopric through Pope Nicholas I may have been seen as a somewhat faint basis for the primacy of Hamburg–Bremen, since it was a late response to the legitimacy problem posed by the creation of the Hamburg archbishopric and its union to Bremen in the middle of the ninth century.[36] The recurrence of the theme of the *legatio gentium* in Adam's narrative testifies to his need to emphasize its importance to the archdiocese's legitimacy.[37]

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35 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 34. "Omnipotens Deus faciat vos omnes huius operis pia benivolentia participes et in celesti gloria Christi coheredes." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 37 (bk. I, ch. 33).

36 This issue was discussed extensively by Knibbs, *Ansgar, Rimbert*. More recently, Janson, "Ansgar und die frühe Geschichte", refuted Knibbs's argument, proposing that Adam presents a fairly accurate account of the facts involving the foundation of the archbishopric, including the problem of the *legatio gentium*.

37 A short look at Schmeidler's index suggests the extent of Adam's use of the *legatio gentium* in

This insistence of legitimacy through the *legatio gentium* prompts Adam to secure almost every Hamburg archbishop's connection to it. He thus emphasizes the actions of these archbishops regarding the spread of Christianity through preaching the gospel to the pagans and promoting the ecclesiastical structure in the new territories. In writing a history of these actions, Adam's arguments favouring the position of his archdiocese understandably accentuate the pioneering character of the missionary work from Hamburg, recurrently insisting that the archbishops were always the first to promote Christianity beyond the Elbe.

In this sense, the closing chapters of Adam's first book provide valuable insights as they discuss Unni's episcopate and missionizing. The archbishop ascends to the throne of Hamburg–Bremen in a difficult context in 918, when the legitimacy of the see was being opposed by the archbishops of Cologne. His appointment, as Adam explains, is based on an almost miraculous situation, which puts him in a comparable position to that of Ansgar when presented to Louis the Pious before taking up missionary work among the Scandinavians at the beginning of the ninth century, that is, almost a century earlier.[38]

Adam's narration of this scene is loaded with symbolism, which serves to reinforce his point. He refers to a New Testament theme, which appears in the Acts of the Apostles;[39] namely, that the choice of ecclesiastical leaders must be connected to the will of God. Moreover, by harnessing this theme, Adam explicitly links the episcopal actions of the Hamburg archbishops with the apostles in Luke's New Testament account. This biblical text, understood as a historical account of the first steps of Christian belief, insistently emphasizes the universal and expansive character of the new religion. Thus, Adam's reference to it reveals, to a large extent, his theological framework and his views and ideals regarding a clutch of ideas: the achievement of a positive episcopal government, the fundamental conditions for the success of the *legatio gentium*, and, in addition, the justification for Adam's comparisons between the archbishops of Hamburg and the apostles.[40]

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his work. Schmeidler also cleverly indicated to which Hamburg–Bremen archbishop each reference points. See "Wort- und Sachregister," in Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 338–39.

38 "Memoriae traditum est a fratribus, cum Reginwardus transisset, Leidradum Bremensis chori prepositum a clero et populo electum. Qui hoc Unni pro capellano utens ad curiam venit. Rex autem Conradus divino, ut creditur, spiritu afflatus, contempta Leidradi specie parvulo Unni, quem retro stare conspexerat, virgam pastoralem optulit. Cui etiam papa Iohannes decimus, ut privilegium indicat, palleum dedit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 55 (bk. I, ch. 54).

39 The second chapter of Acts tells the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit during Pentecost, and in the sixth chapter we find the apostles praying before installing Stephen, Philip, and others in their diaconal office.

40 When he gives them that title. For example: "Interea beatus Ansgarius captivos redimendo, tribulatos refovendo, erudiendo domesticos, barbaris euangelizando, foris apostolus, intus monachus, nunquam legitur ociosus." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 37 (bk. I, ch. 33). Adam also applies the apostolic comparison in negative contexts. For example, when criticizing Tadiko, of whom he writes: "Adalwardo postea defuncto apud nos subrogavit archiepiscopus quendam a Rambsola Tadiconem, qui propter ventris amorem domi famelicus esse maluit quam foris apostolus." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 262–63 (bk. IV, ch. 30).

He is guided by a rather singular perspective of the virtue of piety.[41] He is, therefore, compelled to ground and justify his own positive judgment of Unni's performance by referring to the divine intervention that caused the archbishop's ascension to the see of Hamburg. Accordingly, Adam presents a clear opposition between election by the people, which he associates with secular expectations,[42] and the choosing—anointing, it can be argued—by God himself. This Adam evidently associates with the *legatio gentium* and the duties linked to it. According to the *Gesta*, Unni is chosen by God, through King Conrad I. His episcopate—which was questionable, for it circumvented the established canonical rules for episcopal succession—is justified both by this divine intervention and by the retrospective "proof" of Unni's many successes. All this is employed by Adam to reinforce his narrative message regarding the archiepiscopate of Hamburg–Bremen, especially concerning its calling among the northern pagans.

More than that, Adam's account not only works to legitimize the position of Hamburg by presenting a particular historical narrative, it also informs the modern investigator about how he regarded his own time and his expectations for the future. For Adam, episcopal legitimacy is not only sustained by the legal rigour with which a bishop is elected and invested—it must be remembered that he writes his *Gesta* in the midst of the investiture crisis, of which he was aware,[43]—but above all depends on the consonance between an ecclesiastical leader's actions and the divine will. This could be demonstrated, in Adam's mind, by the zeal of the archbishop for the *legatio gentium*, and by his care for the religious communities of the diocese, that is, his flock. These elements are presented not only here but in other places in the narrative, especially in the account of Ansgar's episcopate, which appears as an idealized model against which all archbishops are compared. These conceptual principles ultimately constitute a foundation upon which Adam builds his text. The main duties of an archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen are condensed in the aforementioned activities, and these determine, in Adam's historiographical work, his appraisal of the see's officeholders.

As Adam tells it, Archbishop Unni, taking advantage of a victory of King Henry I over Gorm, king of the Danes, decided to resume the *legatio gentium* to the Scandinavian peoples, who had been neglected—the narrative implies—since Rimbert.[44] There are

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41 On the connection between piety and Christianization, see Martin Carver, ed., *The Cross Goes North*. See also Arnold Angenendt, *Grundformen der Frömmigkeit im Mittelalter*, 2nd ed., Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 68 (München: Oldenbourg, 2010), and Angenendt, *Geschichte der Religiosität Im Mittelalter*.

42 In the *Gesta* these secular expectations are identified with the figure of Leidrad: "when Reginward passed away, Leidrad, the provost of the chapter at Bremen, was elected by the clergy and the people. […] King Conrad, however, looked with disfavor upon Leidrad's appearance and, seeing the slight Unni standing behind him, gave the pastoral staff to him. Pope John X, as the privilege indicates, also conferred the pallium on him." Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 49. See also Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 55 (bk. I, ch. 54). Above on p. 44n38.

43 On the connection between the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* and the investiture crisis, see Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*.

44 As expressed in "Mirum tamen neque satis cognitum est nobis, an aliqui episcopi in gentes ordinati sint ab Adalgario, ut privilegium insinuat, an haec ordinatio episcoporum inacta

three elements that Adam associates with Unni's decision, which are fundamental to understanding (the renewal of) missionary activity. The first is divine action, expressed through Unni's quasi-miraculous ascension to the archiepiscopal throne. The second is military pressure exerted by the Germanic kings and the subsequent pacification of Danish territory, which are exemplified by the victories of Henry I. The last element is the pious resolution of an archbishop committed to mission among the *nortmanni*, of which Unni is an example here—although the chronicler presents his readers with a broad collection of examples throughout his narrative, of which Unni is certainly not the most prominent.[45] The first theme, divine favour (*preveniente misericordia Dei*), points directly to the special circumstances of Unni's election and does not seem to need a deeper interpretation. Without the deity's merciful intervention, there is no hope in the endeavour, as Christian theology suggests with the Pauline formula: "If God is for us, who can be against us?"[46] The Christianization of the peoples of northern Europe is primarily due to divine mercy extending to both Christians and pagans living outside divine grace,[47] seeking to lead them to salvation—and thus, to history itself.[48]

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remanserit usque ad dies Adaldagi, ut melius confidimus, presertim quod vastacio barbarica vixdum presbyteros inter se morari consenserit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 51 (bk. I, ch. 50).

45 In sum, Adam presents these characteristics in the fifty-eighth chapter of the first book. He writes: "Tunc beatissimus archiepiscopus noster Unni videns ostium fidei gentibus apertum esse, gratias Deo egit de salute paganorum, precipue vero quoniam legatio Hammaburgensis ecelesiae , pro temporis importunitate diu neglecta, preveniente misericordia Dei et virtute regis Heinrici locum et tempus operandi accepit. Igitur nihil asperum et grave arbitrans subiri posse pro Christo latitudinem suae diocesis per se ipsum elegit circuire. Secutus est eum grex universus, ut aiunt, Bremensis ecclesiae, boni pastoris absentia maesti secumque et in carcerem et in mortem ire parati." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 57 (bk. I, ch. 58).

46 Rom. 8:31. Compare this with "Et 'quoniam diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum', dedit ei Dominus ad voti successum et prosperitatem temporis et gratiam regis." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 62 (bk. II, ch. 2). Adam quotes from the same chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans to refer to the achievements of Unni's successor.

47 I refer here to the medieval concept of the division of time in history. It is expressed in the threefold status-formula, which appears in many works from the twelfth-century Renaissance. On this, see Peter Classen, "*Res Gestae*." See also "Civitatis perversae triplex eque status invenitur, quorum primus ante gratiam, secundus tempore gratiae fuit et est, tercius post presentem vitam erit. Primus miser, secundus miserior, tercius miserrimus. E contra alterius partis primus abiectus, secundus prosper, tercius beatus, vel primus humilis, secundus mediocris, tercius perfectus. Ac de duplici utriusque partis statu, quomodo scilicet unus primo humilis, cum latuit, post datis sibi non solum internis bonis, sed et exteriori prosperitate non ut prius abiectus nec adhuc, ut in futuro erit, gloriose perfectus et beatus, medius seu mediocris, alter vero tam infinitarum mutationum motibus quam verae religionis ignorantia primo miser, secundo post revelatam lucem tanto miserior, quanto post manifestatam veritatem inexcusabilior fuit, in precedentibus sat dictum est. De tercio vero, quomodo videlicet haec ad summam beatitudinem profectura, illa ad ultimam miseriam defectura et casura sit, iudicante ac examinante in Ultimo iudicio iustissimo iudice utriusque urbis causam, in hoc octavo opere dicendum restat." From Otto of Freising, *Chronica*, ed. Hofmeister, 391 (bk. VIII, Prol.).

48 As expressed in "Meo autem arbitratu, sicut inutile videtur eorum acta scrutari, qui non crediderunt, ita impium est preterire salutem eorum, qui primum erediderunt, et per quos

However, it seems the two other themes are more significant for an understanding of Adam's position on Christianization: namely, he states that an essential factor for the successful outcome of Unni's enterprise was the favourable political context. The fact that Henry I subdued the Danes in battle, transferred the kingdom's border to the Haithabu region, and ordered the founding of a local Saxon settlement under a (Saxon) margrave was essential for the renewal of the missionary activities among the Danes. Impressed by the Christian kingdom's power and forced by peace treaties, the Danes had to once again welcome the presence of Christian preachers among them. This report by Adam is echoed in Sverre Bagge's thesis concerning the Christianization of Scandinavia.[49] Adam presents the political manoeuvres of the rulers—on the one hand, political pressure from the Christian conquerors, on the other, the Danish rulers' desire for political affirmation through alliances with the Christian kings—as the basis on which the transition from paganism to Christianity is shaped. This uncertain need of the Danish rulers—to submit to German power but also to assert themselves by associating with the religion of the German conquerors—promotes a reopening on the Danish side for the Christianizing efforts of the archbishops of Hamburg–Bremen.

However, Adam suggests that German military might and violent conquest were not alone responsible for the resumption of Danish Christianization. Here we need to pay attention to the details of his description. Unni takes advantage of the favourable situation and decides to resume the missionary efforts among the *dani*, honouring the *legatio* received by the archiepiscopate for the evangelization of the Nordic peoples. Unni takes on his task, believing that there is no obstacle too hard for one who works for Christ[50]—another reference to Pauline theology. In a way, by referencing the Pauline text, Adam implies that Unni's decision to carry out missionary preaching among the pagans is independent of the broader political context, although the peace established by the military subjugation of the Danes may have played a favourable part in the development of the archbishop's plan. In the narrative, such elements—the political context and Unni's fervour—are independent data which converge in a specific context by divine grace so that the Christianization of the Nordic peoples may be carried out.

According to the *Gesta* (bk. I, ch. 59), Archbishop Unni goes to Denmark, where he preaches and teaches the Christian religion to the kingdom's heir, Harald son of Gorm the Old, and many others, both Christian and pagan.[51] The named convert is Harald

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crediderunt." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 59 (bk. I, ch. 61). See also in general Goetz, *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein*.

49 Bagge, *Cross and Scepter*, and Bagge, "Christianization and State Formation." Compare these with Nora Berend, ed., *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*, with chapters dealing with Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the Slavic Christianization.

50 "Igitur nihil asperum et grave arbitrans subiri posse pro Christo latitudinem suae diocesis per se ipsum elegit circuire." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 57 (bk. I, ch. 58). Compare Adam's phrasing with the Pauline epistle to the Philippians (Phil. 4:13): "omnia possum in eo qui me confortat."

51 "Postquam vero confessor Dei pervenit ad Danos, ubi tunc erudelissimum Worm diximus regnasse, illum quidem pro ingenita flectere nequivit saevitia; filium autem regis Haroldum sua dicitur predicatione lucratus. Quem ita fidelem Christo perfecit, ut christianitatem, quam pater

Bluetooth of Denmark, one of the central figures in modern studies of the Christianization process in Danish territory. Harald is mostly famous for his connection to the many narratives around the establishment of Christianity in Jutland. One of these narrative strands concerns the runestone erected in Jelling in the second half of the tenth century, on which Harald declares that he himself is the one who Christianized the Danes, adding that he also conquered Norway. Another contemporary source is the Saxon history by Widukind of Corvey, completed at the beginning of the 970s. Widukind presents an account of Harald Bluetooth's baptism following an ordeal undertaken by a priest named Poppo,[52] which thus proved the power of the Christian God and convinced the Danish king to receive the sacrament.[53]

The divergence between Adam of Bremen's account and other sources from the Middle Ages about Harald are less important in the present analysis. (It has been suggested that Adam's account might be no more than mere distortion of past events to the benefit of Hamburg–Bremen against both the claims of the archbishopric of Cologne, and the attempts by the Danish rulers to establish an independent Church organization in Scandinavia.)[54] The main point here is that the way the *Gesta*'s narrative is organized allows us to conclude that in Adam's view, the institutionalization of Christianity does not constitute the only element in the Christianization process. Adam saw Christianization in part as the legal constitution of the Christian presence in the realm by the establishment of the ecclesiastical territorial architecture of parishes and bishoprics. But more than that, he understood it as a transformation in the socioeconomic and cultural structures of the pagan communities affected by evangelical preaching. This is recurrently implied in the *Gesta*, especially in the way it entangles different processes and temporalities involved in Christianization. Again, this points to Adam's already mentioned conceptions regarding the process of Christianization and its relationship with history itself. Thus, Adam emphasizes that Harald had been converted by Unni through his preaching, although he did not then accept baptism, which occurred only years later after Harald's defeat by Otto I.[55]

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eius semper odio habuit, ipse haberi publice permitteret, quamvis nondum baptismi sacramentum percepit. / Ordinatis itaque in regno Danorum per singulas ecclesias sacerdotibus sanctus Dei multitudinem credentium commendasse fertur Haroldo. Cuius etiam fultus adiutorio et legato omnes Danorum insulas penetravit, euangelizans verbum Dei gentilibus et fideles, quos invenit illuc captivatos, in Christo confortans." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 57–58 (bk. I, ch. 59).

52 Until recently, the identity of this priest was ignored by scholars. However, Michael Gelting published an extensive article in 2010 proposing that this Poppo should be identified with Folkmar of Cologne. See Gelting, "Poppo's Ordeal."

53 See *Sachsengeschichte des Widukind*, ed. Lohmann and Hirsch, 140–41 (bk. III, ch. 65).

54 By Gelting, for example, in "Poppo's Ordeal."

55 "Ad quam rem ulciscendam rex cum exercitu statim invasit Daniam. Transgressusque terminos Danorum, apud Sliaswig olim positos, ferro et igne vastavit totam regionem usque ad mare novissimum, quod Nortmannos a Danis dirimit et usque in presentem diem a victoria regis Ottinsand dicitur. Cui egredienti Haroldus apud Sliaswig occurrens bellum intulit. In quo utrisque viriliter concertantibus Saxones victoria potiti sunt, Dani victi ad naves cesserunt. Tandemque condicionibus ad pacem inclinatis Haroldus Ottoni subicitur, et ab eo regnum suscipiens

This emphasis is not unreasonable. It points to Adam's concept and interpretations of history. He was, to wit, a canon of the Church in Bremen, and an advocate of the Hamburg archdiocese's *legatio gentium* and its rights over the Scandinavian ecclesiastical territories. His stance, however, is not simply an institutional one—at least not in such an emphatic way as indicated by many modern researchers. Adam's defence of the primacy of his archdiocese in the Christianization of Scandinavia seems to have been equally influenced by both theological as well as historical–philosophical matters. As I have suggested, this is implied by Adam's linking the *legatio gentium* to an interpretation of history, oriented by the model of universal history proposed by the late antique triad of Augustine of Hippo, Paulus Orosius, and (at least at a theoretical level) Eusebius of Cesarea. Besides, as specifically regards this episode of the conversion of Harald Bluetooth, Adam composed his work a century afterwards and might have reproduced a commonplace interpretation of the events as they were known in Bremen. Among the many concurrent narratives available at his time, he understandably chose to transmit—or create—the one that best fitted his own conceptions regarding the history of the Hamburg archbishops. In any case, the primary thing to realize is that this passage had to fit Adam's general conceptions, and also that these concepts were not purely political; on the contrary, they are first and foremost historical/theological.

Following the account of Unni's preaching to Harald Bluetooth at bk. I, ch. 59,[56] Adam also mentions that "the saint of God had ordained priests for the several churches in the kingdom of the Danes."[57] This again indicates Adam's ideas concerning the activities connected to the conversion, which he clearly understands as a gradual process, rather than a metanoia occurring in a single moment. His account of the missionary activity in the north constantly suggests that even if some turning points can be identified in the Church's past expansion over pagan territories, Christianization is not completed by such moments. They are depicted, rather, as starting points for the actions of the archdiocese that follow those singular occasions. Furthermore, Adam seems to be especially aware of a need for continuous ecclesiastical work and pastoral dedication to ensure the completion, or perfection, of the Christianity's dissemination. This can be particularly observed in his treatment of ethical issues, a theme addressed in chapter 4 below.

Adam underlines this complex set of ideas in connection with the beginning of Christianization in the north with yet another example, that of Rimbert. Rimbert was Ansgar's assistant on his mission among the Nordic peoples and then his successor as archbishop. Adam's description of his deeds is extensive and largely based on Rimbert's hagiography. Nevertheless, Adam's construction of his account points to his priorities and narrative stress, which stem from his overarching ideological position. Thus, he praises Rimbert's humility, his dedication to his missionary work, and his care for the Christians

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christianitatem in Dania recipere spopondit. Nec mora baptizatus est ipse Haroldus cum uxore Gunhild et filio parvulo, quem rex noster a sacro fonte susceptum Sueinotto vocavit . Eo tempore Dania cismarina, quam Iudland incolae appellant, in tres divisa episcopatus Hammaburgensi episcopatui subiecta est." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 63–64 (bk. II, ch. 3).

56 See p. 46n45 above.

57 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 51.

in Denmark,[58] drawing on the description in the *Vita Rimberti*, and completing it with a quotation from Ambrose's *De officiis ministrorum*. However, even though Adam leans heavily on the *Vita*, he does not do so unthinkingly. On the contrary, his employment of it shows that he subscribes to its account of the saint's life, while his interventions in other parts of its narrative and the way in which Adam alters their meaning to fit his own historical interpretation demonstrates that here his approach to events is different from the hagiography. Adam reads and interprets the *Vita Rimberti* in a very specific way and resignifies the content of the hagiographic narrative to accommodate his own conceptions and worldviews. His quotation from Ambrose of Milan points in this direction. Adam suggests that by following Ambrose's advice—"It is better to save souls for God than gold"[59]—the archbishop of Bremen would be fulfilling the true missionary role. Such a perspective is underlined by the presence of Rimbert's miracles in the historical narrative.[60]

According to the *Gesta*, through his prayer, Rimbert broke the chains that imprisoned Christian slaves at Schleswig, and bought their freedom by giving his horse as payment, thus demonstrating the spirit of a holy man and of a religious leader concerned not only with the political elites (contra those analyses concerned with the role of political power), but with the welfare of all Christians. Such concern extends beyond a purely spiritual perspective relating to Christianization. It suggests, further, a connection between the missionary bishop's activities and his engagement in the social issues afflicting the newly Christianized. Adam's narrative returns here to Rimbert's hagiography and needs, therefore, to be interpreted accordingly. Nonetheless, one should be mindful of Adam's reasons and interests for inserting it into the *Gesta*; it is no accident that he keeps these themes in his account.[61]

It is not the narrated events in themselves that prompt the most interest in this passage, but Adam's choices in drawing on his hagiographical source. Among the different pieces of information Adam had access to, his focus repeatedly falls on the events that show Rimbert engaged in pastoral care and in defence of the Christian *legatio* in Scandi-

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58 "Quid autem dicimus interim nostrum fecisse archiepiscopum? Require in Gestis eius, capitulo XX. Ad redemptionem, inquit, captivorum cunctis pene, quae habebat, expensis, cum multorum adhuc apud paganos detentorum miserias cernere cogeretur, etiam altaris vasa impendere non dubitavit, dicens cum beato Ambrosio: 'Melius est animas Domino, quam aurum servare. Preciosa ergo sunt illa vasa, quae animas de morte redimunt'." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 42 (bk. I, ch. 39).

59 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 38.

60 As can be seen in "Erat igitur sanctus Rimbertus cum Moyse vir mitissimus, cum apostolo, qui omnium infirmitatibus compateretur; precipuam vero curam habuit in elemosinis pauperum et in redemptione captivorum. Unde quadam vice, cum venisset ad partes Danorum, ubi ecclesiam novellae christianitati constructam habebat in loco, qui dicitur Sliaswig, vidit multitudinem christianorum catena trahi captivam. Quid multa? Duplex ibi miraculum operatus est. Nam et catenam oratione disrupit, et captivos equo suo redemit. Cap. Gestorum eius nota XVIII." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 44 (bk. I, ch. 41).

61 On hagiographies see the introductory work by Dieter von der Nahmer, *Die lateinische Heiligenvita*. See also Lotter, "Methodisches zur Gewinnung."

navia. Adam's reasons for doing this are certainly linked to a need to justify the presence of Hamburg–Bremen as an archdiocese with powers over the ecclesiastical territories of northern Europe. But his historical narrative also works as a warning to the archbishops of the diocese themselves, suggesting to his readers—and especially to Archbishop Liemar, to whom he dedicates his *Gesta*—the need to promote the Christianization of the territories beyond the Elbe according to the standards set by the first archbishops as the chronicler presents them in his account. The image proposed by Adam becomes even sharper in his criticism of those who seek in miracles the sign of the holiness of holy men—a clear reference to Gregory the Great.[62] He counters with the idea that the true miracle happens when a pagan turns from sin and adopts Christianity. In other words, for Adam, the mark of the true saint in this context is missionary work—that is, efforts made to save souls. Considering all this, there remains little to support Bagge's view that the spread of Christianity towards northern Europe in the High Middle Ages must be viewed as a purely formal process. According to Adam, the conversion of the individual and the salvation of the soul are equally at the centre of the missionary task.[63] However, we also need to put this statement into context. Although patristic theology, especially Augustine's, maintained that salvation was a matter for each individual, the more intimate view of conversion as an unmediated, personal relationship with God became dominant only after the Reformation of the sixteenth century.[64] Adam's position thus diverges from the notion that the institutionalization of Christianity was sufficient to consider the whole population as thoroughly Christianized. He clearly understands Christianization as a wider phenomenon, encompassing both institutional and individual elements, and uses this understanding to underline the primacy of Hamburg–Bremen over the northern territories. On the one hand, Adam does not consider the *legatio* as being complete before the Church's institutional structures are fully present and orthodoxy established; on the other hand, he still considers the Christianization of every individual to be crucial. Together, this made a strong argument for the primacy of Hamburg–Bremen.

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In this chapter, I have addressed the beginnings of Christianization in northern Europe as presented by Adam of Bremen. The starting point was a question of how Adam employed historical arguments to present his case in favour of the primacy of the Hamburg–Bremen archbishopric regarding the spread of Christianity among the pagan populations of Scandinavia and *Sclavania*. Modern studies have demonstrated that the

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62 "Frustra in sanctis signa et miracula quaeruntur, quae habere possunt et mali, quia secundum auctoritatem sanctorum patrum maius miraculum est animam, quae in aeternum victura est, a peccato convertere, quam corpus, quod denuo moriturum est, suscitare a morte." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 43 (bk. I, ch. 40). This clearly points to Gregory the Great's position, as articulated in his homily 29. Cf. Trillmich and Buchner, *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts*.

63 On this, see also Wood, *The Missionary Life*, and his "Hagiographie und Mission."

64 Up to this point, salvation might have been seen as particular to the individual; the achieving of consciousness regarding a somewhat personal connection to the deity, however, seems to be related primarily to monastic circles

Gesta Hammaburgensis was composed by Adam to underline the prerogatives of the archdiocese in the face of the growing threats posed by internal disputes in the German Empire, conflicts with the Saxon aristocracy, and attempts by the Scandinavian kingdoms to found their own archbishopric. He counters all of these through his narrative of the archbishops' achievements in the Christianization of the north. This account of the beginning of the missionary efforts plays a crucial role in establishing the precedence of the archdiocese.

With Ansgar, Adam presents his readers with a model of a missionary bishop that pointed to Boniface, a central figure in the expansion of Christianity in the Germanic territories of central Europe during the eighth century. Boniface was a highly regarded saint both for Adam's readers and for those threatening the archdiocese in the Elbe-Weser region. Adam had to develop a concept of Christianization to fit his expectations regarding Ansgar, his apostle to the north, and at the same time dismiss attacks from his rivals. These could easily point out that Ansgar had not been the first missionary among the Scandinavians, that his (arch)bishopric in Hamburg was actually destroyed by raiding Scandinavians in the 840s. Likewise, Ansgar's transference to Bremen, it could be argued, created a canonical problem for the primacy claims of the eleventh-century archdiocese, and the union of Bremen to Hamburg and their joint elevation to archiepiscopal see was far from undisputed. By associating Ansgar with Saint Boniface, Adam was able to present an earlier example of a missionary bishop who had also proselytized in regions where other Christians had already been active. This tacitly countered any possible accusation that Hamburg should have no precedence over the north because Ansgar was not the first missionary figure in the region. Adam's greatest achievement in his narrative was, however, to give his readership a concept of Christianization that fitted his attempts to show how the archdiocese was directly involved in the expansion of Christianity in the Scandinavian and Slavic regions.

Christianization, as the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* presents it, was a process. It comprised different elements that needed to work together to guarantee the establishment of the Christian religion among pagan communities. It was not solely a matter of following some Christian rituals, like baptism; nor was it just the preaching of the gospel. It involved these elements, but also pastoral care, the teaching of the newly converted communities, the founding of dioceses and parishes, and also the provision of the necessary ecclesiastical personnel. Finally, it was also a matter of the social and cultural impact not being restricted to the political elites (even though Adam acknowledges that converting the aristocracy was a big advantage to the missionary effort). These themes are all clearly identified in Adam's treatment of the three inaugural archbishops of Hamburg: Ansgar, Rimbert, and Unni. They were responsible for the founding of the archdiocese and the missionary work in the north, and they sustain the argument of the precedence of the Church of Hamburg–Bremen. They are also used to justify the claims of continuity of the *legatio gentium* after Ansgar's death, by implying that if Christianization continued to be promoted from the see, then the rights once received by Ansgar should be attached to it, rather than only to the person of the saint. Faced as he was with the political manoeuvring around the Gregorian reforms and the possibility of having Hamburg–Bremen's privileges—granted by earlier popes—revoked, these legitimizing

strategies were fundamental for Adam's argument. However, he goes a step further: he is not just directly concerned with the political consequences of the rift between Hamburg and Rome, but is especially troubled by the impact of such struggles as viewed through his historical–philosophical beliefs. Adam's efforts to tie the missionary activities of the first archbishops to the universal theme of the expansion of Christianity to the ends of the Earth is evident. It also suggests his interpretation of the archdiocese's role as a quasi end-of-times-Church, with apocalyptic significance regarding the course of (Christian) history. This becomes even clearer when seen against his insistence on the need for continuity of the *legatio gentium*, which is the theme of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

ONGOING CHRISTIANIZATION

IN THE LAST chapter, we explored the way Adam of Bremen represented the beginning of the process of northern Christianization as part of his central argument regarding the pre-eminence of the archdiocese of Hamburg–Bremen. He saw Christianization as a complicated matter that involved many steps and characteristics—things that modern research has treated as opposites rather than complementary. Adam seems to acknowledge both the powerful message of the conversion of a political leader—such as the prefect of Birka under the influence of Ansgar, or Harald, the heir to the Danish throne, by Unni—and also the slow spread of the Christian faith through the piety of sainted bishops, as in the case of Rimbert and his everyday work among the Christian slaves in Denmark. Christianization was, thus, a process that involved not only expansion, but also the establishment of an ecclesiastical structure over the newly converted regions. The first book of the *Gesta* deals with roughly the first century of the history of Hamburg and presents the beginning of the missionary effort in the north. Despite pointing to the foundation of churches and Christian communities during the first phase of the *legatio gentium*, Adam holds off exploring the theme of ecclesiastical organization here. This is very significant: it shows how Adam conceived his historiographical work in relation to the theme of the *legatio*, and that he reflected on contemporary issues while doing so.[1]

The history of the archbishopric and its attachment to the *legatio gentium* had to emphasize the Church's claims of primacy and thus present a narrative of success, while at the same time maintaining the need to keep the status quo of the ecclesiastical organization in the north. The *Gesta* does so by putting forth the idea that the Slavs and Scandinavians were still not completely Christianized and so should not be allowed to develop an organization of their own, thus countering plans for an independent archbishopric for Scandinavia. Adam used the concept of *legatio gentium* to achieve this delicate narrative balance. By extending its meaning to comprise not only missionary preaching but also the spread of a more substantial teaching on orthodoxy and the formation of ecclesiastical structures, he provided his *Gesta* with its own Schrödinger's cat: it allowed the northern communities to be both Christian and non-Christian at the same time. Adam of Bremen conceived of the *legatio* as an ongoing process. This enabled him to connect it to history itself, implying that, since this calling referred to the end of space, that is, the ends of the Earth in the north, it also had to be attached to a notion of the end of time (discussed above). The concept of an ongoing—and endless—enterprise is the theme of this chapter.

The final chapter of the *Gesta*'s first book gives readers clues to the chronicler's ideas regarding his concept of Christianization as a continuous effort that extended beyond

1 On this, see for example, Goetz, "Constructing the Past."

the first preaching or the initial acceptance of baptism. Writing about Archbishop Unni's missionary success, Adam alerts us to the significance of his example. "Lo, ye bishops who, sitting at home, make the short-lived pleasures of honor, of lucre, of the belly, and of sleeping the first considerations of episcopal office!"[2] he writes, in a clear warning against the idleness of hypothetical bishops—or could this be an accusation against Liemar?—who choose enjoyment of the aristocratic life rather than the harsh challenges of the *legatio gentium*. Adam continues by pointing to the opposition between the worldly and heavenly spheres and their impact on reputation: "Look back, I say, upon this man, poor and lowly in worldly respect but praiseworthy and a great priest of God. He who lately was rewarded with so noble an end gave posterity such an example that your indolence cannot be excused by any harsh condition of time and place."[3] Again, the *legatio* is the standard upon which Adam constitutes his argument. He associates the missionary effort and all its complexity with martyrdom and considers it fit for an archbishop to suffer the deprivations that go along with work among pagans. As a result of this self-denial, he envisages the reaching of a saintly status. Adam underlines this with his closing sentence. Unni was an ideal missionary archbishop, because "[u]ndergoing such perils by sea and by land, he went among the fierce peoples of the north and with such zeal discharged the ministry of his mission that he died at the confines of the earth, laying down his life for Christ."[4]

This chapter at the end of the first book also shows Adam's definition of the initial phase of the missionary effort—the reaching of the northern population by the preaching missionaries of Hamburg. It begins and ends with two missionary role models, Ansgar and Unni. If we consider the chapters dealing with the Saxons and the foundation of Bremen as a preamble or introduction to the historical narrative of the Hamburg archbishops, as I believe is the case, then we can clearly identify a correspondence between these two figures. In the second book of the *Gesta*, Adam organizes the historical narrative around a similar correspondence, this time between Adaldag and Bezelin, also known as Alebrand. However, as we will see, this second book primarily presents Adam's concerns regarding the establishment of an ecclesiastical structure over the territories pertaining to the *legatio gentium*. As I have already argued, this step was understood by him as part of the missionary effort.

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2 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 53. "Eia vos episcopi, qui domi sedentes gloriae, lucri , ventris et somni breves delicias in primo episcopalis officii loco ponitis!" Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 60 (bk. I, ch. 63).

3 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 53. "Respicite, inquam, istum pauperem seculi et modicum, immo laudabilem magnumque sacerdotem Christi. Qui nuper tam nobili fine coronatus exemplum dedit posteris, nulla temporum vel locorum asperitate vestram pigriciam excusari posse." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 60 (bk. I, ch. 63).

4 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 53. "[C]um per tanta pericula maris et terrae feroces aquilonis populos ipse pertransiens ministerium legationis suae tanto impleret studio, ut in ultimis terrae finibus exspirans animam suam poneret pro Christo." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 60 (bk. I, ch. 63).

The first thing Adam tells his readers about Archbishop Adaldag, Unni's successor in the northern see, is that he "is said to have restored for us the state."[5] Adam is here referring to the still delicate position of the archdiocese at the beginning of the tenth century, when its legitimacy was being disputed by the archbishopric of Cologne, especially as regards Bremen joining with Hamburg to form the archbishopric for the northern territories. This also forms a significant beginning for the book, contrasting greatly with the closing chapters of the previous one. In the latter, Adam had emphasized Unni's role as the renewer of the missionary efforts among the pagan communities beyond the River Elbe. He presents this plainly and emphasizes it further with Unni's death among the Swedes, portraying this as his martyrdom. Unni's successor Adaldag would also become a renewer, but this time as regards the see's political and institutional position in the ecclesiastical constellation of the tenth-century Empire.

Adaldag began his career as a missionary among the Slavs. There is no clear indication from Adam whether these were the populations living in the region assigned as the work of the Church of Hamburg, to the north, or the Slavs that later became part of the responsibilities of the archbishopric of Magdeburg, which was founded by Emperor Otto I in 967–968. Adam's decision to omit this information is noteworthy and points to his understanding of the *legatio gentium* of Hamburg–Bremen as (up until the foundation of Magdeburg) applying to all the Slavic populations. This being so, Adaldag was certainly working in the archbishopric—and especially in the territories of the *legatio*—before becoming its leader. Indeed, Adam's narrative seems deliberately to try to attach Adaldag to Hamburg–Bremen prior to his elevation to the see. This may be because Adaldag had strong connections with the bishoprics of Verden and Hildesheim, from which Adam likely wanted to keep some distance, seeing as how Hamburg took its territory partly from the Verden. Furthermore, in the context of the disputes with Cologne, an archbishop primarily linked to Verden may have been used to question the real independence of Hamburg–Bremen and thus the status of its archbishopric, in the face of the older episcopates in Saxony. Adam presents such attempts by the Cologne archdiocese to undermine Hamburg–Bremen as one of the central themes during Adaldag's rule.

According to the *Gesta*, Adaldag fought the charges from the archbishops of Cologne in three ways: through missionary activities in the northern regions, through the strengthening of the religious communities in the archdiocese, and through the creation of an ecclesiastical network in the newly Christianized regions. In sum, Adaldag could successfully withstand the attacks from other churches by upholding the *legatio gentium* in all its aspects. Adaldag's dedication to the work of the *legatio* is, in fact, depicted explicitly. Upon receiving his office, the archbishop "turned his attention to the legateship, which his predecessors had first received for the salvation of the heathen and which came to him in such good order that what others had sowed in tears, he might reap in joy. His soul was all aglow, I say, with a burning desire somehow to accomplish that which from a feeling of pious duty he had set himself to do."[6] Following this statement,

5 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 54. "Iste est, qui nobis, ut dicitur, rem publicam restituit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 61 (bk. II, ch. 1).

6 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 55. "Mox de legatione sua, quae pro gentium salute primo a

Adam has the archbishop influencing Emperor Otto I—to whom, he states, Adaldag was very close—gaining his attention regarding the Christianization of Denmark. It finally came under the power of the Empire and the Church of Hamburg through the creation of three bishoprics that were placed under the archdiocese's administration. From the pope, Adaldag received the authority to consecrate bishops to those dioceses, which also confirmed his position as an archbishop for the northern regions.[7]

Adam states that Adaldag was, thus, the first archbishop to consecrate bishops to Denmark, and that he convinced them of the importance of the work of the *legatio gentium* in such a manner that "indeed, such increase followed these beginnings of heavenly mercy, God working with them, that the churches of the Danes are seen to abound in the manifold fruits of the northern peoples from that time even to this day."[8] For the chronicler, therefore, since Adaldag's time there had been continuity in the work of the archdiocese among the Danes in an institutional, organized manner, and, as the *Gesta* implies, before him, since at least the work of Ansgar. This is important if we are to understand Adam's views on history and specifically its relationship with the missionary activity in the north and the theme of the *legatio* in general (even though it seems clear that Adam does not clearly distinguish between these).

The discussion around Harald Bluetooth's conversion is, in this sense, pertinent. In chapter twenty-eight of the second book, Adam states that Harald is the one "who first declared Christianity to the Danish people, who filled the whole north with preachers and churches."[9] A clear connection can be found between the chronicler's descriptions of Adaldag and Harald, especially concerning the coordination of missionary activities in Scandinavia. Both men are considered to have inspired and set the example for the expansion of the Christian presence among the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes. This link between the Danish king and the archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, Adam may be trying to show his readers how fundamental is the connection between the archbishopric and the ruler of Denmark for the success of Christianization. His account of the death of Harald Bluetooth follows his short notice of Sven Forkbeard's rebellion, which Adam associates with the latter's apostasy. Considering the complicated context in which Adam wrote, and the fact that he himself greatly

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decessoribus suis recepta hoc sibi ordine provenit, ut, quod alii in lacrimis seminarunt, ipse in gaudio meteret, toto, inquam, animi desiderio succensus aestuabat, quomodo perficeret, quod religioso pietatis formabat affectu." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 62 (bk. II, ch. 2).

7 This account is found in Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 62–64 (bk. II, ch. 3). He narrates the creation of the three bishoprics following the baptism of Harald Bluetooth, which he ascribes to Otto I's victory over the Danish king.

8 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 57. "Et haec quidem initia celestis misericordiae secutum est tale incrementum, Deo cooperante, ut ab illo tempore usque in hodiernum diem ecclesiae Danorum multiplici borealium gentium fructu redundare videantur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 65 (bk. II, ch. 4).

9 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 73. "At ille noster Haroldus, qui populo Danorum christianitatem primus indixit, qui totum septentrionem predicatoribus et ecclesiis replevit, ille, inquam, innocens vulneratus et pro Christo expulsus martyrii palma, ut spero, non carebit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 88 (bk. II, ch. 28).

depended on good relations with the Danish ruling house as a source of information, it is plausible to think that he wants to warn his readers, especially Archbishop Liemar, of the advantages of working together with the Danes for the maintenance of the *legatio gentium*. It is well known that by the time Adam composed his *Gesta*, rulers in the Scandinavian regions were pressing for the creation of an archbishopric in their own territory, possibly one of the reasons why Adam was sent to meet the Danish king, Sven Estridsen.

On the other hand, connecting the spread of churches and preachers with Harald's conversion may also be seen as a warning by Adam to Hamburg's archbishops, who were expected to take the leading role in such enterprises. By declaring that Harald had a decisive influence in the expansion of Christianity among the Scandinavians, and by relating this to the virtues and miracles ascribed to him, Adam implies that the course of history, that is, the Christianization of the northern territories, can be accomplished despite the individual efforts of the archbishops and their *legatio*. Indeed, by depicting Harald as a martyr and a virtuous Christian, the chronicler suggests that any such Christian should be able to spread the Christian faith among the Scandinavians and the Slavs, even if he or she had not received the *legatio gentium*. In this light, the Christianization process is presented as independent of the institutional action of specific agents—which seems to contradict the idea of the *legatio* as a privilege attached solely to the archdiocese of Hamburg–Bremen. However, this contradiction is merely apparent. What Adam is suggesting is that it is God himself, as history's guide, who works towards the spread of Christianity, through these agents. And—here is the warning—if the archbishops are not willing to uphold their task, the deity will use other means to accomplish His plans.

The many versions of Harald Bluetooth's conversion and the following establishment of Christianity in Denmark show an interesting link with Adam's historical thinking. His position regarding the narrative of Danish Christianization is ultimately undecided. By and large he considers that Harald's conversion was the result of Archbishop Unni's work during his travels to Denmark in the 930s; at least twice he implies this in his narrative. But he assumes that Harald Bluetooth was baptized (and therefore became a Christian, according to the medieval theological tradition)[10] only after being forced to do so after being defeated by Emperor Otto I. Otto was also allegedly present at the baptismal ceremony, where he may have raised Sven Forkbeard from the baptismal font and named him Sven-Otto, attesting his own influence in the matter. Finally, Adam seems also to have known the story of Harald's conversion after witnessing the ordeal undertaken by the priest Poppo, as told by Widukind of Corvey.[11] Adam's choice to foreground the importance of Unni for the Danish conversion has been seen mainly as a

10 The theme of baptism and conversion among the Vikings, although in the context of their expeditions into *Francia*, is investigated by Christine Walsh, "Baptized but Not Converted: The Vikings in Tenth–Century Francia," *Studies in Church History* 51 (2015): 67–79, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0424208400050117.

11 This can be suggested based on his attempt to ascribe the baptism of the Danish king to Otto I's influence, which is clearly a mistake—or a manipulation. On this, see Gelting, "Poppo's Ordeal."

reflection of his partiality in favour of the archbishopric of Hamburg.[12] But it may just as much be the result of his views on history and the role played by the *legatio gentium* in the overarching historical–philosophical theme of salvation that marks his work.

When writing about the work Adaldag performed in the *legatio gentium* during his episcopacy, Adam may have intended a direct comparison to his own time, especially considering that Adaldag and Liemar were both archbishops who spent much time away from the diocese accompanying the emperor on his travels south of the Alps. According to the *Gesta*, "[o]ur archbishop [Adaldag], on whom depended the most important decisions, spent all these days and years in the kingdom of Italy."[13] Adam recognizes some ambivalence in this situation. He understands the political consequences of such proximity between the archbishop and the ruling emperor, and its advantages for an archdiocese facing external opposition. We can see this in the text, where Adam suggests that Adaldag was so highly regarded by the emperor that even in a dispute with his own brother, Archbishop Bruno of Cologne, Otto would side with Adaldag and settle the matter in favour of the archdiocese of Bremen.[14] Furthermore, Adaldag's stay with Otto in Italy is presented as resulting in the transfer of relics to the Bremen diocese, which Adam explicitly emphasizes in his account. "Immense gain accrued to the Church at Bremen from his sojourn, for at this time, it is related, he collected the relics of the saints in which this our bishopric exults now and for all time."[15] And yet, Adam also recognizes that Adaldag's absence caused much discontent at home: "Impatient at the good shepherd's long absence, his people are said by their messengers and letters to have at length so disquieted him that he deigned to visit his flock."[16] And here we see how, for Adam, the *legatio* is key to the historical experience. A close connection to the emperor may bring some immediate political advantages, and the travels of an archbishop may increase the riches of his ecclesiastical foundations. However, nothing can replace the presence of the archbishop and his continuous work for the diocese. Adam makes it quite clear that between political influence and care for its own flock, the second option should be an archbishop's first choice.[17]

Like Adaldag, Liemar was absent from Bremen during the creation of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. Indeed, it has been argued that this is one possible reason why Adam

12 For example, Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia*.

13 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 59–60. "His diebus annisque totidem noster archiepiscopus, apud quem summa consiliorum pendebat, in regno Italiae conversatus est." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 68 (bk. II, ch. 11).

14 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 65–66 (bk. II, ch. 6).

15 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 60. "Ingens lucrum de peregrinatione sua Bremensi ecclesiae paravit. Tunc enim collegisse traditur patrocinia sanctorum, quibus nunc et in aevum triumphat hoc nostrum episcopium." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 68 (bk. II, ch. 11).

16 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 60. " Fertur eius populus non ferens diuturnam boni pastoris absentiam nuntiis et litteris metum ingerentibus tandem effecisse, ut suum gregem visere dignaretur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 68 (bk. II, ch. 11).

17 On care for the diocese as a central duty of an archbishop, see Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 88–119.

wrote in the first place.[18] Liemar was appointed to the see by Henry IV after the death of Adalbert in 1072. According to Günter Glaeske, the emperor's choice in the appointment—ignoring the jurisdiction of the cathedral chapter in this matter—is characteristic of policy under Henry IV, reflecting the growing tensions between Church and state. On one side was the imperial Church system (on which part of the emperor's power rested), with the resulting need for the ruler to exercise control over the most influential sees. On the other side was a move for greater ecclesiastical autonomy and power through centralization, expressed by the formula of the *libertas ecclesiae* promoted by the papacy, and which posed a threat to imperial political praxis concerning the ecclesiastical territories and powers in the Germanic realm.[19]

Liemar was a member of a family of *ministeriales*—an unfree noble status[20]—which seems to have made him especially suited for Henry's political plans in northern Saxony. His actions during the Saxon rebellions that had already broken out in 1073 are an early, but significant, example here: while seeking a settlement between the parties, the archbishop still sided decisively with the emperor and was present in his retinue—and absent from his see—for the entire conflict.[21] Liemar's involvement in the disputes over the right of the investitures and his position up to 1080, which is the period covered in this study, shows he was an important supporter of the imperial cause and an ally of Henry IV under all circumstances. As a consequence, however, he possibly neglected many of his duties in the diocese, especially its attachment to the *legatio gentium*. During his long episcopate, he intervened only once in the northern territories, when he threatened to excommunicate King Erik III from Denmark, on unclear grounds.[22] "One sees," writes Wilhem von Bippen, "that the archbishop probably dedicated more than half of his reign to the service of the king and the imperial affairs."[23]

His actions in the diocese seem to have been limited to the late period of his office and probably Adam was no longer alive to witness them—they were certainly not taken into consideration while he was writing. However, some of the decisive mishaps of Liemar's tenure do not seem to have influenced Adam either. He probably did not live to see the loss of the *Stiftsvogtei* of Bremen to the margrave of Meißen in 1088, which meant the loss of some of the diocese's juridical independence. Nor did he note the arch-

18 For example, by Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Janson, "Adam of Bremen and the Conversion of Scandinavia."

19 Glaeske, "Liemar," 527: "L. wurde Pfingsten 1072 in Magdeburg von Heinrich IV. als Nachfolger Adalberts auf den Hamburg-Bremer Erzstuhl erhoben. Die Wahl eines ihm besonders ergebenen landfremden Unfreien wie auch die Nichtbeachtung des zuständigen Domkapitels sind charakteristisch für die Politik Heinrichs IV., die die Stärkung seiner Stellung gerade in so gefährdeten Gebieten wie Sachsen zum Ziel hatte."

20 On the *ministeriales* see Arnold, *German Knighthood*.

21 On Liemar's actions during his years as archbishop, see Bippen, *Geschichte der Stadt Bremen*.

22 Glaeske, "Liemar," 527: "Der Dienst am Reich ging jedoch zweifellos zu Lasten des eigenen Bistums. L. hat, -soviel wir wissen, nur einmal in die nordischen Kirchenverhältnisse eingegriffen: Aus unbekannter Ursache drohte er Kg. Erich III. von Dänemark mit dem Bann."

23 Bippen, *Geschichte der Stadt*, 74: "Man sieht, daß der Erzbischof wol mehr als die Hälfte seiner Regierungszeit dem Dienste des Königs und den Reichsgeschäften gewidmet hat."

bishop's failing attention toward the northern territories that resulted in the creation of the Scandinavian archbishopric of Lund as early as 1104. And yet, Adam's theme of Adaldag's continuing care for his diocese and the *legatio gentium* in spite of his absence, seems to suggest that Adam had some concerns regarding Liemar's position, caught between the Empire and his diocese.

In contrast with Liemar's initial abandonment of missionary activity and ecclesiastical expansion, we find Adam's description of Adaldag's efforts to secure the position of the archdiocese in Denmark and among the Slavs. This is especially underlined in Adam's rhetoric about Adaldag's success. He is depicted as being the archbishop responsible for the Christianization of the Slavs at that time—indeed, he is shown as a missionary among them even before his election to the see. "It is said that he, celebrated also for his learning and miracles, had preached to the Slavic peoples at the time our Unni was on his mission to the Swedes."[24] This may be inaccurate, or even wishful thinking on Adam's part, since Adaldag can be located with certainty at the emperor's chancellery prior to his ascent to episcopal office in Bremen in 937. But it certainly shows the significance of the matter for Adam and for his pursuit of the historical meaning of the archdiocese as connected to the *legatio gentium*. Interestingly, the account of these missionary activities seems precisely to replace Adaldag's connections to the Ottonian dynasty prior to taking office.

Adam later returns to this theme of the Christianization of the Slavs to justify the foundation of Slavic suffragan dioceses attached to the metropolitan archdiocese. During his description of the Slavic territory and population commended to the archbishopric, he states that "it is related that nearly all the Slavs were at that time converted to the Christian religion through the efforts of our archbishop Adaldag."[25] There is a clear effort on Adam's part to connect Adaldag's tenure with the success of the *legatio gentium* among the Slavic populations, despite his long absence from the archdiocese spent supporting the Ottonian rulers. This certainly contrasts with the situation with Liemar that Adam was experiencing by the time he wrote the *Gesta*, and it may have served him as a kind of mirror to be held up to the new archbishop—a historically oriented piece of advice implying that neither Liemar's absence nor the struggles with political violence would suffice to justify his failings in his care for the diocese and the *legatio*. As with Liemar's difficulties with the Saxon rebellion, so too did Adaldag have problems—by the end of the tenth century, the crisis in the Danish kingdom certainly affected the work of the archbishop, as Adam states. Yet, Adaldag's zeal in the cause of the *legatio gentium* guarantees the presence and flourishing of Christianity among the Slavs and Scandinavians.

According to Adam, "in Oldenburg the archbishop first of all consecrated, as we have said, Egward, or Evagrius, then Wago, thereafter Esico, in whose times the Slavs

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24 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 54. "Quem ferunt etiam doctrina et miraculis celebrem Sclavorum populos eo tempore predicasse, quo noster Unni ad Scythas legatus extitit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 61 (bk. II, ch. 1).

25 Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg–Bremen*, 64. "Sclavi eo tempore studio nostris pontificis Adaldagi narrantur ad christianam religionem fere omnes conversi." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 75 (bk. II, ch. 20).

remained Christian. […] Churches were erected everywhere in Slavia. There were also very many monasteries built in which men and women served God. […] [Sven Estridsen] assured us that all but three parts had been converted to the Christian faith."[26] Thus the chronicler creates a clear association between the commitment of the archbishop to the duties involved with the *legatio gentium*, and the success of the Christianizing enterprise among the northern populations. If he foresaw the loss of the Scandinavian suffragan dioceses as a result of the convulsions experienced during the episcopates of Adalbert and Liemar, then it is possible that he saw in the achievements of prior archbishops, like Adaldag, a means to reverse the damage of events contemporary to the *Gesta*'s composition. It is not surprising, therefore, that Adam suggests a close relationship between the activities of evangelization, the building of ecclesiastical structures, teaching, care for the communities, and the existence of the archdiocese itself.

Adam summarizes his position regarding Adaldag's archiepiscopal activities in the seventh chapter of the *Gesta*'s second book: "The zeal of the father Adaldag was in truth entirely directed to the conversion of the heathen, to the exaltation of the churches, and to the salvation of souls."[27] These elements form, as it seems, Adam's basic conceptions regarding the duties of the archbishop relating to the *legatio gentium* and, thus, to the archdiocese itself. It may also reflect, again, his critical position towards Liemar's absence from the diocese. This is suggested by the closing sentence, in which Adam attaches the reverence toward Adaldag not to his presence in the Ottonian court, but to his work in the *legatio*. Even Adaldag's enemies honoured him, which could be a hint to Liemar's struggles with the Saxon nobility. Altogether, however, Adam intends to demonstrate to his readership the connection between the *legatio gentium*, the role of the archbishop and his diocese, and an eschatologically oriented sense of history.[28]

Another connection can also be identified in this passage regarding Adaldag's zeal, namely with the first archbishop of Hamburg, Ansgar. Ansgar—and before him, Boniface—reappear as models in Adam's summary of Adaldag's activities. In his recent study, Thies Jarecki has identified the general model on which Adam moulds his descriptions of ideal archbishops, and that consequently express his conceptions regarding the

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26 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 71–72. "In Aldinburg ordinavit archiepiscopus primo, ut diximus, Egwardum vel Evargum, deinde Wegonem, postea Eziconem, quorum tempore Sclavi permanserunt christiani. Ita etiam Hammaburg in pace fuit. Ecclesiae in Sclavania ubique erectae sunt; monasteria etiam virorum ac mulierum Deo servientium constructa sunt plurima. Testis est Danorum rex, qui hodieque superest, Suein; cum recitaret Sclavaniam in duo de XX pagos dispertitam esse, affirmavit nobis absque tribus ad christianam fidem omnes fuisse conversos." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 86 (bk. II, ch. 26).

27 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 58. "Nempe studium patris Adaldagi totum fuit in conversione gentium, in exaltacione ecclesiarum, in salute animarum, pro cuius rei magisterio meruit vir dilectus Deo et hominibus, ut omnibus in veneratione haberetur, etiam inimicis." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 66 (bk. II, ch. 7).

28 Medieval historiography had a very particular view of the purpose of history and how temporal experience was to be interpreted in light of the book of Revelation. Goetz, *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein* thoroughly investigates aspects of medieval historiography. For a study specifically on the relationship between historiography and politics, see Bagge, *Kings, Politics, and the Right Order of the World*.

office.[29] Jarecki agrees with Eva Schlotheuber[30] that aspects of the *Gesta* are closely related to the model set by Gregory the Great's *Regula Pastoralis*, suggesting that Adam describes the life of the Hamburg–Bremen archbishops by following certain questions: "how did the bishop come to office?; how did he live?; what did he teach?; was he humbly conscious of his weaknesses?"[31] The account of Adaldag's election and installation by the emperor and the pope's conferment of the *pallium* correspond to the first of these questions, whilst the circumstances of his death relate to the last. The other two questions regarding the archbishop's life and teachings constitute the historical account of his actions while holding the office.[32] However, Jarecki points out that the scheme presented by Gregory's *Regula Pastoralis* reaches its limits precisely in the description of Archbishop Adalbert's deeds, which constitute the whole third book and consequently a good portion of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. "Indeed," he argues, "Adam's structure can also be explained without Schlotheuber's template and it does not completely fit it."[33]

While this might be correct, Jarecki's explanation of such discrepancies, which can be traced back to Schlotheuber's study as well, does not seem satisfactory. According to him, Adam's difficulty in applying this schema to the description of Adalbert's character and deeds arises from the archbishop's change in character and behaviour during his episcopal tenure.[34] He concludes that Adam wishes first and foremost to tell the history of the Church, that is, from an institutional point of view, and therefore the figure of the archbishop has to corroborate this story.[35] Both Jarecki and Schlotheuber are engaged in analyzing the characterization of the bishops, and consider Adam's work as reflecting an ethical or institutional point of view. In this frame of reference, the theme of the *legatio gentium* is dealt with as only one aspect of the historiographical narrative—a minor one, in fact. By turning our attention to *legatio* as the guiding principle of Adam's narrative, we come to a different conclusion regarding the conceptual framework in which he constructs his arguments concerning the archbishops, especially if the connection between the *legatio gentium* and the historical–philosophical views of the *Gesta* are considered.

As demonstrated above, Adam's ideas regarding the meaning of the *legatio gentium* from within such a historical–philosophical perspective influences his choices and the

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29 Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*.

30 Schlotheuber, "Persönlichkeitsdarstellung."

31 Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 66: "Adam orientierte sich an den vier Fragen, mit denen Gregor der Große seine Hirtenlehre strukturierte: wie der Bischof ins Amt kam, wie er lebte, was er lehrte, ob er sich demütig seiner Schwäche bewusst war."

32 Following the argument in Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 66ff.

33 Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 66: "Doch Adams Struktur ist auch ohne Schlotheubers Muster erklärbar und fügt sich in dieses nicht vollständig hinein. Gerade Adams Interesse und Herkunft und Charakterisierung, also das *unde* bzw. *quis fuerit*, wird nicht erfasst."

34 Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 67: "Nachdem ein erster Ansatz zu einer einleitenden Charakterisierung bereits das Problem der widersprüchlichen Beurteilung Adalberts aufzeigt, bezieht Adam die Schwierigkeiten der Behandlung dieses Bischofs auf sich selbst."

35 Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 67–68: "Es geht also um die Hamburg-Bremer Kirche. Die Taten des Bischofs treten dahinter zurück."

construction of his narrative. However, to ensure that his text worked to "strengthen the tired mother church,"[36] Adam needed to show that the successes of the *legatio gentium* were not only in the past or solely attached to the saintly figure of Ansgar, the apostle of the north and founder of the archbishopric. Success needed to be attached to as many office holders as possible. But he also needed to show the uniqueness of the deeds of the archbishops, to set Hamburg–Bremen's history apart from the many other churches competing for influence over the Scandinavian territories at that time. The creation of a particular narrative concerning some institutional characteristics of the archdiocese (as discussed by Jarecki), or the connection to some specific ethical claims (as seen in Schlotheuber's analysis), certainly helped bolster Hamburg–Bremen's claims. However, it is Adam's insistence on the relationship between the work of the *legatio* and his views on history that single Hamburg–Bremen out. It is this that forms the central argument of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. Adam's narrative choices consistently show his concern to link the deeds of the archbishops to the *legatio*, and his reticence towards Adalbert points to the latter's gradual abandonment of the mission in exchange for involvement in imperial affairs and the pursuit of earthly advantages. We will return to these issues later. For now, however, we need to consider again Adam's conceptions regarding the *legatio* and of Christianization as an ongoing process whose end points to the end of history itself.

The understanding of Christianization as a continuous process can be glimpsed in the final chapters that Adam dedicates to Adaldag's archbishopric. While treating the Danes and Slavs as Christianized from this point forward, he does not omit to mention the setbacks to the spread of Christianity. In fact, Adam uses these episodes as a warning to his readers of the need to continue the work of the *legatio gentium*, which cannot be regarded as just the missionary activities of evangelization, but must be seen as a set of activities involving preaching, teaching, caring, and building up the ecclesiastical (infra-) structures, as I have been arguing. According to the *Gesta*, "[i]n the last days of Archbishop Adaldag our cause among the barbarians was broken down, Christianity in Denmark was thrown into confusion, and, envying the fair beginnings of God's religion, a wicked man tried to oversaw with cockle. […] Of a sudden, therefore, the Danes entered into a conspiracy to renounce Christianity."[37] Through passages like this, it becomes

36 Adam declares this intention in the prologue: "Mox igitur ut oculis atque auribus accepi ecclesiam vestram antiqui honoris privilegio nimis extenuatam multis egere constructorum manibus, cogitabam diu, quo laboris nostri monimento exhaustam viribus matrem potuerim iuvare." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 1 (Praef.).

37 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 72. "Novissimis archiepiscopi temporibus res nostrae inter barbaros fractae, christianitas in Dania turbata est, pulcrisque divinae religionis initiis invidens inimicus homo superseminare zizania conatus est. Nam tunc Suein Otto, filius magni Haroldi, regis Danorum, multas in patrem molitus insidias, quomodo eum iam longaevum et minus validum regno privaret, consilium habuit et cum his, quos pater eius ad christianitatem coegit invitos. Subito igitur facta conspiratione Dani christianitatem abdicantes Suein regem constituunt, Haroldo bellum indicunt. At ille, qui ab initio regni sui totam spem in Deo posuerat, tunc vero et maxime commendans Christo eventum rei, cum bellum execraret, armis se tueri decrevit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 87 (bk. II, ch. 27).

evident that for Adam the work of the *legatio gentium* is broader than simply spreading the Gospel and baptizing new converts. To wit: Sven Forkbeard was Christianized and baptized in the presence of Emperor Otto I, who acted as his godfather at the baptism, and yet he revolted against his father Harald and—this must be stressed—against the Christian faith itself, seeking to eliminate it from Denmark.

This suggests that Adam conceives of the *legatio* as a continuous effort that extends beyond the first moment of conversion and baptism; opposition to Sven's revolt and apostasy can be understood as part of the archbishop's duties not only as head of the archdiocese, but also as the personal bearer of the *legatio gentium*.[38] This becomes clearer in Adam's narrative of Adaldag's death: "In the meantime, when the old and faithful Adaldag had accomplished his mission according to his desire and had prospered in his every work at home and abroad, he departed to the Lord at a fruitful old age."[39] Francis Tschan's translation conceals Adam's actual word choice here. Adam really writes that Adaldag departed "having masterly fulfilled the vows of his legation"—*de legatione sua voti compos effectus*. Tschan's translation is not incorrect, but it depends on an interpretation of *legatio* as only missionary work. With the benefit of Ian Wood's recent reflections on missionary activities in the Early and High Middle Ages, such a narrow interpretation no longer seems sufficient as a translation of Adam's ideas.[40] On the contrary, by associating the *legatio* of Adaldag with his activities *domi forisque*, Adam suggests that the *legatio gentium* has to be understood as an archbishop's work as a whole, comprising not only the spread of Christianity to pagan populations beyond the northern borders of Saxony—expressed by Tschan's idea of "mission"— but also the care of the whole church community, teaching, and the expansion of the ecclesiastical structures both at home and in recently Christianized regions.

According to the *Gesta*, after Adaldag's death only Libentius I was deemed to be fit for the archiepiscopal throne, because he sought to imitate his predecessor in conducting his life and his office.[41] Once again it is the *legatio gentium* that characterizes Libentius I's tenure: "Like his predecessors, he prosecuted [*legationem suam ad gentes*] with great zeal even though he was hindered by evil days."[42] Adam does not suggest that Libentius I followed Adaldag only as the head of the Church of Hamburg–Bremen, but

38 According to Jarecki, there is a clear divide between the duties of the bishop and the work in the *legatio*, with the latter being only one aspect of a more general conception of archiepiscopal duties. Cf. Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*.

39 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 73. "Interea senex fidelis Adaldagus de legatione sua voti compos effectus et in omni opere suo domi forisque prosperatus in senecta uberi migravit ad Dominum." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 88–89 (bk II, ch. 28).

40 On Wood's proposals regarding the interpretation of mission in the Early and High Middle Ages, see Wood, "What Is a Mission?" and his *The Missionary Life*.

41 "Itaque vir litteratissimus et omni morum probitate decoratus ab Italia quondam pontificem secutus est Adaldagum. Cuius vitam aemulatus et magisterium solus ex dispositione tanti patris dignus inventus est, cui Hammaburgensis cura parochiae crederetur." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 89 (bk. II, ch. 29).

42 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 75. "Legationem suam ad gentes magno, ut decessores sui, studio executus est, licet obstaret dierum malicia." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 90 (bk. II, ch. 29).

primarily as the legate to the northern populations, a position that brought with it the title of archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen, and not the other way around. This is important. It means that in the chronicler's eyes, the *legatio gentium* precedes the archbishopric not only chronologically—which is attested by Adam's account of Ansgar's deeds in the first book—but also regarding its importance in history. It is the *legatio* that justifies the existence of the archbishopric, not the other way round. Thus, by neglecting his duties toward the *legatio*, an archbishop puts not only the achievements of his predecessors at risk, but also his office. The warnings that Adam directed to Liemar through the narrative of Adaldag's deeds, therefore, unmistakably connect with his expectations of the *legatio gentium* and its meanings on a philosophical-historical level.

The link between an archbishop's activities and Adam's expectations toward the *legatio* can also be identified in this chapter introducing Libentius I. After praising Libentius's determination to imitate his predecessor's life and dedication to office, Adam adds: "It is said that, staying quietly at home, he took most diligent care of his diocese and, turning every endeavor to the profit of souls, held all his communities most strictly to the rule. The archbishop in person attended to the care of the hospital, daily ministering dutifully to the brethren and the infirm."[43] In this passage, Libentius clearly enacts Adam's idea regarding Christianization as an ongoing process. His duties, which were intimately linked to his zeal toward the *legatio*, were carried out *domi sedens*, that is, while staying at home, in his parish in Bremen. They were performed through his care for the religious communities, where he introduced stricter observance of monastic rules, and his dedication to the infirm and the brothers at the hospital in Bremen, to whom he ministered personally, even after being elected archbishop. Furthermore, Libentius also travelled through his diocese and "frequently visited the Transalbingian peoples and cherished their mother at Hamburg with fatherly love."[44] In sum, just as with Adaldag, Unni, Ansgar or Rimbert, the *Gesta* is clear in suggesting that there is a direct connection between the successful leadership of the archbishopric and dedication and zeal for the *legatio gentium*. Even when facing strong opposition, none of these men faltered in their duties, as the account of Libentius's efforts regarding the maintenance of Christianity among the Danes under Sven Forkbeard demonstrates.

Central to Adam's use of the *legatio gentium* as the guiding principle of his historical narrative is definitely the adaptability of his conceptions, especially from Libentius's time, when, according to the *Gesta*, the Christianization of the northern communities was firmly established (despite the—knowingly exaggerated—setbacks under Sven Forkbeard and the complicated situation among the rebellious Slavs). While up until Adaldag's rule Adam placed a special emphasis on evangelization and the expansion of

43 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 74. "Domi sedens quietus parrochiae suae curam egit diligentissimam totumque studium vertens ad lucrum animarum districtissima, ut aiunt, regula custodivit omnes congregationes suas. [Archiepiscopus etiam per se curam hospitalis egit, fratribus et infirmis cotidiano ministrans obsequio." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 90 (bk. II, ch. 29).

44 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 75. "Dum adhuc pax esset in Sclavania, Transalbianos populos frequenter visitavit et matrem Hammaburg paterno fovit amore." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 90 (bk. II, ch. 29).

Christianity, from Libentius onward he shifts his attention to the internal organization of the diocese and its suffragans. Yet he does so without considering this change to signify a loss of the *legatio*'s object and, thus, its justification.

Adam associates Libentius's actions regarding the *legatio gentium* both with the archbishop's virtues,[45] and with his care for the internal affairs of the diocese. The passage above, where he is said to have dedicated his entire attention to religious communities and the observance of the rule, as well as his personal care for the hospital at Bremen, indicates that Adam sees in these activities the fulfillment of Libentius's duties toward the *legatio*. It corresponds to the "at home" side of the *domi–foris* formula that Adam employs.[46] He later returns to the theme of the *legatio* under Libentius and associates it with the many bishops Libentius appointed to the sees founded in Denmark, thus explicitly stating the connection between the organizational duties of the archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen and Adam's understanding of the tasks of the *legatio gentium*: "Our archbishop in the meantime was sedulous about his mission to the heathens and consecrated several bishops whose names and sees are uncertain because persecution weighed upon the times."[47] The link Adam establishes here between the *legatio* and the ordination of bishops is very clear. However, it must be pointed out that these bishops were not missionaries sent to convert the Danes, but priests sent to govern parishes already established in the Scandinavian territories.

Adam's account of the deeds of Odinkar the Younger in Ribe point in this direction. He states that Bishop Odinkar was native to Denmark and a member of the high aristocracy there, so he could afford to endow his diocese with many riches from his own family fortune.[48] Adam's presentation of Odinkar the Younger in his narrative simultaneously suggests two things. The first is that the Danes were already sufficiently familiar with Christianity to provide the personnel for the recently founded dioceses on Danish territory, as well as to equip those dioceses materially. The second is that despite such developments, the Danes still depended on the guidance of the archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen and were thus still linked to the *legatio gentium*.

That Hamburg–Bremen's involvement in the affairs of these churches was significant for the success of the *legatio* is indicated by Adam's suggestion of the impact of Libentius's ordinations on the overall spread of the faith. According to the *Gesta*, Odinkar "most valiantly defended Christianity in Denmark."[49] Adam further adds that "[t]

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45 On this connection between virtues and the *legatio gentium*, see chapter 4.

46 Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde* discusses the use of such categories in the *Gesta*.

47 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 86. "Interea noster archiepiscopus de legatione sua in gentes sollicitus plures ordinavit episcopos, quorum nomina et sedes incertae [sunt], quia tempus persecutionis incubuit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 106 (bk. II, ch. 46).

48 "Eius discipulus et nepos fuit alter Odinkar iunior, et ipse nobilis de semine regio Danorum, dives agri, adeo ut ex eius patrimonio narrent episcopatum Ripensem fundatum. […] Is vero a Libentione archiepiscopo nunc ordinatus in gentes apud Ripam sedem accepit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 96–97 (bk. II, ch. 36).

49 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 80. "et christianitatem in Dania fortissime defendit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 97 (bk. II, ch. 36).

hese men, we have learned, were at that time distinguished in this region. Others, who still survived from the days of Adaldag, were not idle. They also went on into Norway and Sweden where they gathered many people unto Jesus Christ."[50] Therefore, the *legatio gentium* is further maintained by the appointment of priests to the sees in Denmark, Sweden, and Transalbingia, for these priests not only made the Christian presence in their own parishes stronger, but also pressed for its spread to further communities, approaching the ends of the world. Thus, Adam's narrative shows yet again an essential connection to Augustinian and Orosian historical–philosophical categories for the interpretation of the past.

Given this, Adam's position toward priests and missionaries brought from England to Scandinavia at this time can be interpreted in a new light. The passage that follows the account of Odinkar's success is thought to be at odds with the *Gesta*'s position elsewhere regarding external influences in territory under Hamburg–Bremen's jurisdiction.[51] After explaining that certain traditions (*traditur*) claimed that Olaf Tryggvason was baptized by some—undefined (*viros* [...] *a quibus*[52])—priests sent by Hamburg to Norway, Adam suggests that the Norwegian ruler was actually Christianized by English missionaries. Departing from the Anglo-Saxon realms they had headed to the Scandinavian territories to preach the Christian religion, disregarding the rights of the archdiocese. "If this is true, the mother church at Hamburg did not, I say, look askance even at strangers if they bestowed grace upon her children."[53] This passage at bk. II, ch. 37 has prompted scholars to question Adam's attitudes to the pre-eminence and exclusivity of Hamburg–Bremen and its bishops when it comes to the Christianization of Scandinavia. The inconsistency seems to be especially evident when compared to other passages where Adam sharply criticizes English missionaries, saying they were acting in disregard of the jurisdiction and prerogatives of the archdiocese and harming the *legatio gentium*.

During the episcopacy of Unwan, Libentius's successor, Cnut the Great established his rule over England and appointed a series of English bishops to take over different sees in the territories controlled by the Danes and under the jurisdiction of Hamburg–Bremen. According to the *Gesta*: "Our archbishop Unwan took offense at this and is said to have seized Gerbrand as he was returning from England. Unwan had learned that he had been consecrated by Aethelnoth, the archbishop of the English. Persuaded by neces-

50 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 80. "Hos viros comperimus illo tempore claros in ea regione, aliis qui adhuc supervixerant a diebus Adaldagi non ociosis. Qui etiam in Norvegiam et Suediam progressi populum multum Iesu Christo collegerunt." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 97 (bk. II, ch. 36).

51 See, for example, the discussion on Adam's position in Gelting, "Poppo's Ordeal."

52 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 97 (bk. II, ch. 36).

53 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 80. "Si hoc verum est, non invidet, inquam, mater Hammaburgensis ecelesia, si filiis suis bene fecerint etiam extranei, dicens cum apostolo: 'Quidam predicant per invidiam et contentionem, quidam autem propter bonam voluntatem et karitatem. Quid enim? Dum omnimodo sive per occasionem, sive per veritatem Christus annuntietur, et in hoc', inquit 'gaudeo et gaudebo.'" From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 98 (bk. II, ch. 37).

sity, Gerbrand made satisfaction and promised the fidelity and subjection due the see of Hamburg, […] The latter also sent his legates to King Canute, […] reproving him for the presumption of the bishops whom he had brought over from England."[54] This passage seems to be in clear opposition to the account of Libentius's rule above, in which Adam claimed that Hamburg would not have opposed the presence of missionaries from England. Such a drastic turn around in the short gap separating the two passages is certainly unsettling.

However, instead of accusing Adam of being hypocritical and thus dismissing the statement at bk. II, ch. 37 on the grounds of his later comments regarding English missionary activity in Scandinavia, I believe that a re-evaluation of Adam's views on the *legatio gentium* resolves the problem. It is only if we restrict the definition of the *legatio* to that of evangelizing that tension between the passages appears. If, on the other hand, we understand the *legatio gentium* as consisting of not only missionary preaching but also the establishment of ecclesiastical structures, the teaching and support of Christian theology, and pastoral care, then the apparent conflict in the text fades away. Instead of being ambiguous about his position, Adam actually employs it coherently to interpret the past. For a start, the situations narrated in both passages are different from each other—in bk. II, ch. 37 Adam discusses a more theoretical situation, while in bk. II, ch. 55 he narrates the actual consequences of Cnut's appointment of English bishops. Furthermore, those English bishops brought to Danish territory by Cnut had been consecrated to their sees not by the archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen, as Adam makes clear, but by Æthelnoth, the archbishop of Canterbury. This was, therefore, in contravention of canonical dispositions. In Adam's eyes, this meant that the appointment of these bishops was not only a juridical aberration, but threatened his conceptions of *legatio gentium* and potentially endangered the course of history itself.

Later in the *Gesta*, Adam returns to this issue to confirm that foreign missionaries did not constitute a problem for Hamburg–Bremen if they followed the archbishop's lead, something that Adam equated with God's plan for the spread of Christianity. When recounting the deeds of Olaf Haraldsson in Norway, he again mentions the presence of English missionaries brought to Norway by the Norwegian king: "And [Olaf] had with him many bishops and priests from England by whose admonitions and teaching he prepared his heart to seek God, and he committed his subjects to their direction. […] At the king's command they also went to Sweden, Gothia, and all the islands beyond Norway, preaching the Word of God and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ to the barbarians."[55]

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54 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 93. "Quo tempore episcopos ab Anglia multos adduxit in Daniam. De quibus Bernardum posuit in Sconiam, Gerbrandum in Seland, Reginbertum in Fune. Zelatus est hoc noster archiepiscopus Unwan. Et dicitur Gerbrandum redeuntem ab Anglia cepisse, quem ab Elnodo Anglorum archiepiscopo cognovit esse ordinatum. Ille, quod necessitas persuasit, satisfaciens, fidelitatem Hammaburgensi cathedrae cum subiectione debitam spondens familiarissimus deinceps archiepiscopo effectus est. Per quem ille suos etiam legatos ad Chnud regem transmittens cum muneribus congratulatus est ei de rebus bene gestis in Anglia, sed corripuit eum de presumptione episcoporum, quos transtulit ex Anglia." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 115 (bk. II, ch. 55).

55 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 94. "Habuitque secum multos episcopos et presbyteros ab

This passage shows similarities with the one in which Cnut introduced English clergy to Scandinavia. Like Cnut, Olaf Haraldsson intended to strengthen the Christian presence in his dominions by promoting an entourage of church officers, of which some were even consecrated bishops. Olaf also sent his priests throughout Scandinavia to Christianize the entire region, including some territories which were not under his political control, like Sweden. However, whereas Archbishop Unwan deprecated Cnut's actions, Adam does not suggest that he took offence at what Olaf did. Given that elsewhere in the *Gesta* Adam seems to generally favour the Danish point of view,[56] explaining the discrepancy with a political argument will not work.

However, a possible clue to the interpretation of this passage is given by Adam himself. Following the account of the missionary activity of these English priests, he writes: "[Olaf] also sent messengers with gifts to our archbishop, entreating him graciously to receive these bishops and to send his bishops to him, that they might strengthen the rude Norwegian people in Christianity."[57] While the bishops brought to Denmark by Cnut were consecrated by Æthelnoth of Canterbury and, according to the *Gesta*, did not seek approval from the archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen, the priests and bishops brought by Olaf Haraldsson to Norway seem to have done so, even if only after they had begun work. Furthermore, Olaf also asked for the assistance of the archbishop in carrying out his plan to promote the Christianization of the territories he ruled, which again fits, in Adam's eyes, the necessary connection between the archdiocese of Hamburg and the conversion and administration of the north. Thus, even if only in Adam's view of the past, Olaf Haraldsson appears as a king willing to promote Christianization while still submitting it to the power of the archdiocese, which, again for Adam, ultimately meant that Olaf wished to preserve the *legatio gentium* and thus contribute to the overarching scheme of salvation history. This is finally underlined in the text by an explanation of why Olaf invited these English priests to Norway: "For soothsayers and augurs and sorcerers and enchanters and other satellites of Antichrist live [in Norway]. All these and others of their kind the most blessed king Olaf decreed must be pursued in order that, with their scandals removed, the Christian religion might take firmer root in his kingdom."[58] As Adam clearly states, Olaf's intention was to strengthen Christianity in

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Anglia, quorum monitu et doctrina ipse cor suum Deo preparavit, subiectumque populum illis ad regendum commisit. […] Hii etiam iussu regis [ad] Suediam, Gothiam et omnes insulas, quae trans Nortmanniam sunt, accesserunt, euangelizantes barbaris verbum Dei et regnum Iesu Christi." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 117–18 (bk. II, ch. 57).

56 His treatment of Olaf Tryggvason is probably the best-known passage in which Denmark is clearly favoured and the Norwegians opposed, although there are many other examples. See Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*; Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*; and Buchner, "Die politische Vorstellungswelt."

57 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 94–95. " Misit etiam nuntios ad archiepiscopum nostrum cum muneribus , petens, ut eos episcopos benigne reciperet suosque ad eum mitteret, qui rudem populum Nortmannorum in christianitate confortarent." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 118 (bk. II, ch. 57).

58 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 94. "Nam et divini et augures et magi et incantatores ceterique satellites Antichristi habitant ibi, quorum prestigiis et miraculis infelices animae ludibrio

the territories he ruled, a remark signally absent from Adam's account of Cnut. We are therefore invited to conclude that the Danish king had some other reason for resorting to English clergymen to lead his dioceses. It is, then, by connecting the reasons and deeds of the characters with the chronicler's views on the *legatio gentium* that we can interpret the past in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. But only an understanding of the *legatio* as a complete ecclesiastical program (including evangelization, teaching, pastoral care, and infrastructural expansion) can provide us with a full contextual setting for this interpretation.

Archbishop Unwan, who opposed Cnut's interference in the ecclesiastical affairs of the Church of Hamburg–Bremen, is depicted by Adam as being especially concerned with the internal order of his diocese. According to the *Gesta*, Unwan promoted a renewal of religious communities. He "was the first of all to impose the rule of canons on his communities, which, indeed, had lived before according to a mixed rule of life, partly that of monks and partly that of canons."[59] By transferring his attention from the evangelization of pagans to the organization of the internal structures of his diocese, Unwan follows the line of action that marked the rule of Libentius I. Indeed, his concern for the organization of regular life in Hamburg–Bremen seems to emulate—at least as far as the narrative goes—that of his predecessor, who is also presented as dedicating special care to his community. This shift from the external expansion of Christianity to the internal organization of the archdiocese is further explored by Adam in his account of Unwan, who helped crystallize this aspect as an integral part of the duties attached to the *legatio gentium*. Unwan "ordered all pagan rites, of which superstition still flourished in this region, to be entirely uprooted in such a manner that he had new churches built throughout the diocese in place of the sacred groves which our lowlanders frequented with foolish reverence. Among these groves he also commanded the Basilica of Saint Vitus to be built outside the town and the Chapel of Saint Willehad restored because it had burned."[60] Thus readers are shown that the task of Christianization had to be understood as a continuous effort by the rulers of the archdiocese. It does not end with the first conversions, or indeed with the establishment of the first Chrisitan communities and an ecclesiastical infrastructure. By appending to Unwan's success the introduction of the canonical rule in his diocese, and by mentioning the need to purge communities of still-present pagan rituals (*ritus paganicus*), Adam conducts his readers to this conclusion.

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demonibus habentur. Hos omnes et huiusmodi beatissimus rex Olaph persequi decrevit, ut sublatis scandalis firmius coalesceret in regno suo christiana religio." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 117 (bk. II, ch. 57).

59 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 87. "Unwanus primus omnium congregationes ad canonicam regulam traxit, quae antea quidem mixta ex monachis vel canonicis conversatione degebant." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 108 (bk. II, ch. 48).

60 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 87. "Ille omnes ritus paganicos, quorum adhuc supersticio viguit in hac regione, precepit funditus amoveri, ita ut ex lucis, quos nostri paludicolae stulta frequentabant reverentia, faceret ecclesias per diocesim renovari. Ex quibus etiam basilicam sancti Viti extra oppidum construi et capellam sancti Willehadi combustam iussit reparari." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 108 (bk. II, ch. 48).

The connection to the *legatio gentium* might not be evident in this passage but it is later, when Adam summarizes the archbishop's accomplishments before mentioning his passing. Unwan was praiseworthy for his efforts to strengthen the Christian religion not only abroad—where he was involved in the foundation of Skara, the first episcopal see in Sweden, appointing Thorgut as its first bishop—but also in his own parish, where he consolidated orthodoxy and renewed the communities of religious. In Adam's words: "Since at that time there was a firm peace between the Slavs and the Transalbingians, Archbishop Unwan rebuilt the metropolis of Hamburg and, bringing together the clerics who had been dispersed, assembled there a great number both of citizens and canons. […] In such wise Archbishop Unwan, distinguished at home and abroad, is said to have carried out his mission among the heathen."[61] Here Adam declares quite clearly that the dedication of Unwan to the *legatio gentium* was enacted both at home (*domi*) and abroad (*foris*). It was the sum of both these things—the spread of Christianity *foris*, and the care for the affairs of the church *domi*—that guaranteed Unwan's success and distinguished him in his archiepiscopal rule.

Adam's account of the deeds of Libentius II follows a similar scheme to that of Unwan. Libentius II is presented as a caring archbishop, who had a special interest in the situation of the regular life in his parishes, acting constantly to ensure religious observance and the welfare of the community, a characteristic which he shares not only with Unwan and Libentius I but also with Ansgar, Rimbert and Bezelin Alebrand. The chronicler again ties Christianization amongst the Scandinavians and Slavs to the internal organization of the archdiocese, considering both to represent Libentius II's dedication to the *legatio gentium*. "Lievizo [Libentius II], good in the provostship and even much better in the see, entered upon his mission to the heathen with a fervent spirit. After winning to his side first of all Canute, the king of the Danes, he put Avoco in Gerbrand's place in Zealand, consecrated Meinher for Oldenburg, and appointed Gottschalk of Ramelsloh bishop in succession to Thorgaut."[62] Reaching out to the Danish king and the appointment of bishops to the archdiocese's jurisdiction combine the inward and outward actions required by the *legatio*. Further, according to the *Gesta*, Libentius II also strove to increase the treasure and the endowments of the diocese, which Adam interprets as an expression of the archbishop's pastoral care for his Church. "In the meanwhile our archbishop, by pious works ever intent upon heaven, as a prelate graced his Church and as a pastor reared the sons of the Church, acceptable to all, even to the princes—which is difficult."[63]

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61 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 96. "Eo tempore cum esset pax firma inter Sclavos et Transalbianos, Unwanus archiepiscopus metropolem Hammaburg renovavit, clerumque dispersum colligens magnam ibidem tam civium quam fratrum adunavit multitudinem. […] Tali modo pontifex Unwanus domi forisque clarus legationem suam in gentibus narratur implesse." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 119–20 (bk. II, ch. 60).

62 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 99. "Libentius itaque bonus in prepositura, multo melior in cathedra legationem suam ad gentes ferventi animo ingressus est; et primo omnium concilians sibi Chnud regem Danorum Gerbrando subrogavit in Seland Avoconem, in Aldinburg ordinavit Meinherum, Thorgato autem successorem posuit de Ramsola Gotescalcum episcopum." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 123–24 (bk. II, ch. 64).

63 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 101. "Interea noster archiepiscopus piis operibus celo semper

As Adam points out, Libentius II was thus able to attract the favour of the Saxon aristocracy in the person of Emma, a widow connected to the dukes of Saxony.

Bezelin Alebrand, who succeeded Archbishop Hermann to the Hamburg–Bremen see, is also praised by Adam for his dedication to the religious communities in his parish. He "rebuilt the monastery and himself first instituted a noonday meal for the canons. […] [T]he brethren daily received white bread over and above the usual portion […] He arranged, too, that the brethren be given wine, even though it is foreign to Saxony […] When he had adjusted the noonday meal, he turned his attention to the monastery. This building, which previously had been of wood, he constructed in stone, […] Next, he built the wall encircling the city, […] raising it in some places up to the battlements."[64] Thies Jarecki considers these infrastructural and organizational measures instituted by Bezelin Alebrand and his predecessors as representing Adam's expectations toward the archbishop's office and its duties, rather than their dedication to the *legatio gentium*.[65] Indeed, for Jarecki the *legatio* is no more than one of the duties—that of proselytizing—among the many that an archbishop was expected to carry out. Based on passages such as the one above, and being especially concerned with the second half of the second book and Adalbert's deeds in the third book, Jarecki maintains that Adam writes from the point of view of one seeking the welfare of the religious communities in his home parish. That is, that Adam orients his historical writing toward his own interests as a canon in Bremen.[66]

However, Jarecki seems to ignore, or at least differentiate, between Bezelin's attention to the local clergy in Bremen and his activities as a missionary bishop among the pagans living in the north. Accordingly, Adam's coverage of the archbishop's dedication to the Christianization of the Slavs—which included strengthening the seat in Hamburg—is not mentioned as a reflection of Bezelin's interest in the *legatio gentium*. In the narrative, Bezelin orders the reconstruction of the church in stone and builds a

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intentus ecclesiam suam episcopaliter exornavit et filios ecclesiae pastoraliter educavit, omnibus acceptus, etiam, quod difficile est, principibus." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 126 (bk. II, ch. 67).

64 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 104. "Nam et claustrum renovavit et mensam a canonicis ipse primus instituit . Prius enim cum prebenda tenuis fere videretur, XXX convivia, quae Libentius episcopus per annum dare statuit, adiectis ex sua parte quibusdam decimis, ita ordinare videtur, ut cotidie panis albus fratribus detur ultra solitam annonam; in dominicis vero diebus unicuique duplex mellitae copia. Nam et vinum dari fratribus contra naturam Saxoniae disposuit, quod etiam in diebus suis ferme peregit. Composita mensa manum vertit ad claustrum, quod ipse, dum prius ligneum esset, lapideum fecit, forma, ut mos est, quadrangula, vario cancellorum ordine distinctum et visu delectabile. Deinde murum civitatis ab Herimanno decessore orsum in giro construens in aliquibus eum locis usque ad propugnacula erexit, alias quinque aut VII cubitorum altitudine semiperfectum dimisit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 130–31 (bk. II, ch. 69).

65 See Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 227ff.

66 Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 228–29: "Dabei drückt Adams Werk gerade im Engagement für Wohl, Rang und Rechte seines Bistums den Anspruch des Domklerus auf kirchenleitende Mitverantwortung und Kontrolle aus, wie sie sich auch im Herausstellen der Memorialmacht über die Amtsinhaber zeigt. Entsprechende Wünsche und Forderungen richtet Adam auch abschließend, gewissermaßen als Zusammenfassung, an Erzbischof Liemar."

stone house in the form of a tower for himself,[67] which prompts the Slavic leaders to submit to the archbishop and, therefore, to once again receive Christian missionaries among the Winuli. In the words of the *Gesta*: "The princes of the Slavs, Anadrag and Gneus and Ratibor, came peacefully to Hamburg and rendered military service to the duke and prelate. But then as now the duke and bishop worked at cross purposes among the Winuli people; the duke, indeed, striving to increase the tribute; the archbishop, to spread Christianity."[68] As is clear from this passage, Adam connects the archbishop's efforts within the diocese, exemplified here by the strengthening of the episcopal seat in Hamburg, with the expansion of Christianity among the rebellious Slavs, who can be interpreted as the pagans living beyond the borders of the Saxon–Christian world (even if Adam admits that almost all of the north was already Christian by the beginning of the eleventh century). The remarks that follow underline this further, tying Bezelin's zeal for the Christianization of the Slavs to his efforts to organize and control his own parishes. "The archbishop was also, in the manner of his predecessors, solicitous about the mission among the heathen with which he had been entrusted, and he consecrated as coadjutors in the preaching bishops Rudolf, one of his chaplains, for Schleswig; Abhelin for Slavia; Wal, of the chapter at Bremen, for Ribe; while the others, who were mentioned above, still lived and were not idle in the vineyard of God."[69] Therefore, contra Jarecki, the *legatio gentium* cannot be dissociated from the other activities of the archbishop. In fact, it seems that, for Adam, it constitutes the reason for all the other activities related to the archiepiscopal office.

It is because Bezelin is conscientious towards the *legatio*, which he received with his position, that he invests in the construction of the church and residence in Hamburg, dedicates time to organizing regular life in his parish, and is interested in the nomination of bishops to the different sees in the north. This adds to the chronicler's argument in favour of the archdiocese and its privileges regarding the Slavic and Scandinavian regions, both in terms of the extension of Christianity and the organization and administration of the Christianized regions. This has been extensively explored by modern studies of the *Gesta*. However, Adam takes the meaning of the *legatio gentium* a step further and connects it with the very notion of historical development. This is clearly exhibited in the treatment of Bezelin Alebrand's episcopacy: "It is clear […] that because

67 "Alebrandus vero pontifex adversum crebras hostium incursiones aliquod fortius presidium pro inopia loci necessarium arbitratus primo omnium ecclesiam, quae constructa erat in matris Dei honorem, lapide quadro aedificavit. Aliam deinde sibi domum lapideam fecit, turribus et propugnaculis valde munitam." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 132, (bk. II, ch. 70).

68 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 105. "Principes Sclavorum Anatrog et Gneus et Ratibor pacifice ad Hammaburg venientes duci ac presuli militabant. Sed cum diverso modo et tunc et nunc in gente Winulorum dux et episcopus laboraret, scilicet duce pro tributo, pontifice vero pro augenda christianitate laborantibus." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 132–33 (bk. II, ch. 71).

69 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 106. "Archiepiscopus igitur pro legatione sibi ad gentes credita more predecessorum sollicitus coadiutores predicationis ordinavit episcopos, Rodulfum ex capellanis in Sliaswig, Abhelinum in Sclavaniam, Wal a Bremensi choro consecravit in Ripam, ceteris qui supra fuerunt adhuc viventibus et in vinea Dei non ociosis." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 133 (bk. II, ch. 72).

of the efforts of the priests the Christian religion would long ago have become strong there if the avarice of the princes had not hindered the conversion of the folk."[70] From this statement, it becomes evident that, for Adam, the Christianization of the communities living beyond the Elbe is certain. It is part of the history foreseen in the prophecy–commandment of Matthew's Gospel. The *legatio* constitutes the means to achieve the results, which have been already predetermined by God. In this sense, the *legatio* exists beyond its connection to Hamburg–Bremen, but it is this archdiocese that, through Ansgar, received the privilege to coordinate and carry on the task set by Christ himself. An archbishop's dedication to this task is, therefore, linked to the questions of "where" and "how" the prophecy–commandment will be fulfilled, but not to whether it will ultimately succeed.

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In this chapter, I have proposed that in the *Gesta* we see the Christianization of Scandinavia and Nordalbingia as an ongoing process rather than a singular moment in history. Adam presents this idea in many ways, all of them tied together by the overarching concept of the *legatio gentium*. Almost every archbishop is shown in a close connection to the *legatio*, even if Adam changes his views on how those rulers of the archdiocese fulfilled their responsibilities towards the northern communities. The emphasis he places on the *legatio gentium* is thus not always directly linked to missionary activity per se. That is, the archbishops' fulfillment of this duty might be depicted as their dedication to the evangelization of pagans, as is the case of Unni or Adaldag, or as their interest in pastoral care and the teaching of Christian orthodoxy at home, as with Unwan or Bezelin Alebrand. However, Adam's characterization of Hermann's rule over Hamburg–Bremen stands as a counterpoint to his ideas regarding the *legatio*. Hermann is shown as a bad archbishop because "[h]e rarely visited his diocese. […] He came once to Hamburg and then with an army, despoiling the bishopric as if it were not his own, and he left, deriding the land as if it were a briny waste."[71] Understandably, Adam's appraisal of Hermann's short tenure is very harsh: "Thus also did the great high priest Heli, because he did not restrain his own from rapine, displease, even in many good deeds, God, to whom belongs revenge."[72] By disregarding his duties relating to the *legatio*, which must be understood also as care for his own parish, Hermann is compared with the Old Testament priest Eli, who was killed by God's intervention after permitting all sorts of misconduct from his sons and being himself very permissive and corrupt. Indeed, it is significant to note that

70 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 105–6. "videtur mihi iam dudum studio sacerdotum christianam religionem ibidem convaluisse, si conversionem gentis avaricia principum non prepediret." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 133 (bk. II, ch. 71).

71 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 102. "Raro parrochiam visitavit; semel Hammaburg accessit, et tunc cum exercitu veniens i episcopatum quasi non suum despoliavit abiensque velut terram salsuginis derisit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 128 (bk. II, ch. 68).

72 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 103. "Ita ille magnus pontifex Heli, dum suos a rapina non corripuit, etiam in bonis aliquibus Deo ultionum displicuit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 129 (bk. II, ch. 68).

Hermann is the first archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen to die outside his diocese, a fact that Adam of Bremen sees as worthy of mention.[73]

The connection between an archbishop's success, his activities in his parish, and his dedication to the *legatio gentium* are evident throughout Adam's narrative, and they are further underlined by the negative example of Hermann, and possibly of Adalbert (as I will later discuss). Modern studies have therefore tended to stress that the chronicle's central theme is the mission to the pagans in the north.[74] However, these studies seldom relate mission to those activities performed at home. The latter are usually interpreted as tasks that have their origin in the archiepiscopal office but do not necessarily relate to the *legatio*; they are separate instances of an archbishop's deeds.[75] But as I have suggested here, Adam does not differentiate clearly between an archbishop's and a missionary's activities. On the contrary, he constantly suggests that archiepiscopal activities within his parish and abroad in the north are connected and influence one another, to the point that he openly says that caring for the communities at home should be interpreted as part of an archbishop's zeal for the *legatio gentium*.

If we interpret Adam's position like this, the alleged tension between his claims of primacy over the Scandinavians and Nordalbingians and the complicated reality of the spread of Christianity towards the north tends to fade. Anders Winroth has summarized this tension as follows: "Generally, the archeological material tells us about the process of Christianization, while the written sources focus on institutional conversion, on the baptism of chieftains and kings, and on the building of churches and the installations of bishops." He adds that "[e]ach of the written sources, to boot, is driven by an agenda that must be deconstructed before one may start using it as a source."[76] This is typical of the position adopted by scholars that concern themselves with Adam's narrative. For most historians, Adam deliberately distorts the events he narrates in order to present the archdiocese in a better light to his readers. Interestingly though, this argument makes little sense if we assume the audience of his history was basically composed of members of the diocese, who would have no need for arguments in favour of the diocese's interests in Nordalbingia and Scandinavia. Indeed, the perspective is not Adam's but rather belongs to the modern researchers, who have access to other sources and materials and are able to compare different versions of the Christianization process to conclude that the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* is not some pure representation of the past, but only one of the many versions of it. The tension between Christianization as an immediate change or a gradual transformation—expressed in Winroth's dualism between conversion and Christianization, or between written and archaeological sources—must, therefore, be interpreted as the result of the clash of two different modes of conceiving history itself and, in addition, the fact that most modern historians are unwilling to accept, in a practi-

73 If we consider, as Adam does, that Birka, where Unni died, is part of the archdiocese. "Mortuus est autem in episcopatu Halverstedensi." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 129 (bk. II, ch. 68).

74 For example, Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*; Goetz, "Constructing the Past"; Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*; Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*; and Trommer, "Komposition und Tendenz."

75 Especially Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*.

76 Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia*, 104.

cal way, that medieval chroniclers were well aware of the distance between the fact and its narrative, even if they do so in theory.[77]

As I discussed in this chapter, the many histories of conversions in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* are but one of the many pieces of evidence by which Adam understood the Christianization of the Nordalbingians and Scandinavians—and even the Saxons—to be an ongoing process, whose end would be concomitant with the end of history itself. In Adam's eyes, this Christianization is certainly not a simple undertaking, concluded with the baptism of pagan leaders and detached from the internal affairs of the archdiocese. It is, as we will see, further involved with other issues, like identities and ethics. These are the themes of the following chapter.

77 For example, see Hans-Werner Goetz, "Von der *res gesta* zur *narratio rerum gestarum*: Anmerkungen zu Methoden und Hilfswissenchaften des mittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibers," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 67, no. 4 (1989): 695–713 and Goetz, *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein.*

Chapter 4

CHRISTIANIZATION, ETHICS, AND IDENTITIES

SO FAR OUR analysis has been dedicated to the events directly connected to the Christianization of the Slavs and Scandinavians, beginning in the first chapter with an overview of Adam's construction of the paganism practised in those regions. The second chapter looked at the question of when Christianization began and who conducted it, while the third explored Adam's understanding of Christianization as an ongoing process. All of this can be understood, more or less, as a straightforward history of the missionary activities and of religious change in the northern regions of medieval Europe. In this fourth chapter, we turn to two things that are directly connected to the chronicler's ideas concerning the *legatio gentium* but are not specifically seen as actions or conditions for Christianization. Ethics and identities are constantly present in Adam's narrative of Christianity's expansion beyond the River Elbe, and both help his readers understand how the incorporation of new peoples within the Christian fold connects with his concept of history.

Ethics: Adam and the Ideal Archbishop

Adam's use of ethical evaluations throughout the *Gesta* has already been investigated, especially in connection with Archbishop Adalbert, whom he discusses extensively in the third book. However, most of these studies are not concerned with the relationship between the ethical dimension and Adam's historical narrative per se, or his ideas regarding history. Sverre Bagge looks into the description of Adalbert's traits mainly in order to define the notion of character and personality—that is, of individual psychology and consciousness of self. His main concern is whether people living in the Middle Ages considered the possibility of evolution and change of character in a deep, psychologically referenced manner, which could be contrasted with the notion of the self that emerged only during the modern era.[1] Consequently, ethical elements that characterize Adam's narrative concerning Adalbert are central to Bagge's study and point to some awareness on Adam's part of the singularity of the subject. For Bagge, "Adam [...] presents Adalbert's deterioration of character as the main theme of the book."[2] Despite

1 Bagge, "Decline and Fall," 530: "The notion of an 'organic' development of character has been regarded as one of the crucial criteria of the European concept of the individual since the late eighteenth century, just as the idea of the historical process or the organic development of society is considered an essential criterion of modern historicist thought. This view presupposes that similar ideas did not exist in the Middle Ages. However, several medievalists have attempted to show that ideas or descriptions of development of character in something like this 'modern' sense are to be found in the Middle Ages, at least in particular cases."

2 Bagge, "Decline and Fall," 532.

this, Bagge does not follow up on the apparently logical connection between the ethics in Adalbert's characterization and what this progressive deterioration means from a theoretical perspective. This would have underlined the relationship between these ethical issues and the broader idea of historical development in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. Indeed, despite questioning why Adam spends almost the entire third book discussing Adalbert's character and some general events instead of describing his deeds[3]— and later actually stating that "[i]n a certain sense, character is the clue to historical narrative in Adam"[4]—Bagge does not himself link the ethical development of Adalbert to the historical development of the Hamburg–Bremen diocese.

Writing about a decade later, Eva Schlotheuber also discusses the ethical elements of Adam's description of Adalbert's character, and again the focus of her investigation is on the idea of personality rather than the relationship between ethics and history. This reflects, to some degree, a tradition in the analysis of the *Gesta* established (according to Schlotheuber) by Bernhard Schmeidler at the beginning of the twentieth century. As I have repeatedly pointed out, Adam's historical narrative is mainly concerned with the theme of the *legatio gentium*. This was translated by Schmeidler as his intention to present the history of Hamburg and its connection to the missionary activities in the north. In addition, if we agree with Schmeidler's reading, Adam was providing a kind of instruction manual for the new archbishop, Liemar, who was seemingly unaware of the tasks required by his office. Interpreting the *Gesta* like this apparently answers the question regarding the function of Adalbert's description and of the third book, which clearly stands out when compared to Adam's treatment of all the other bishops. Indeed, this is a central element in Schlotheuber's study: how do the general concepts of the *vitae* in Adam's work relate to each other, considering the discrepancies in length between the first fifteen Lives and that of Adalbert? Furthermore, how appropriate is a lengthy description of Adalbert's personality and character in a historiographical work dedicated to the missionary duties of the archdiocese and its leaders?[5]

Schlotheuber's answer to those questions takes as its starting point what it is that connects all these *vitae*. Thies Jarecki points in the same direction, believing that Adam

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3 Bagge, "Decline and Fall," 532 indicates that there are expectations regarding the narrative of Adalbert's deeds in the *Gesta*: "Book III of Adam's work is both a history of the diocese and a biography of Adalbert, as one might suspect from its title, 'Gesta'; this suggests that the actions of particular persons, rather than their character or events in general, are here in focus." However, he later (p. 546) states that "[m]ost of Adam's narrative is actually an extended characterization. He rarely mentions single episodes or direct examples of Adalbert's behavior, and he does not describe in precise detail the Archbishop's successes and the disasters striking the diocese. Insofar as there is a narrative of events, it mostly serves either to illustrate the Archbishop's character or to explain changes in it."

4 Bagge, "Decline and Fall," 539.

5 Schlotheuber, "Persönlichkeitsdarstellung," 500: "Unbeantwortet bleibt bei alledem vor allem die Frage, wie sich das mehr als 70 Kapitel umfassende dritte Buch zu den fünfzehn wesentlich kürzeren und einfacher konzipierten Viten der Vorgänger Adalberts verhalt, wie also die Gesamtkomposition aller drei Bücher Amtsviten gedacht war. Paßt 'die verständnisvolle Darlegung' eines komplexen Charakters wirklich zu einer kompakten Zusammenstellung von Missionsaufgaben und Handlungsrichtlinien für den neuen Erzbischof Liemar?"

presents a clear scheme for the representation of the *vitae* in his work that is strongly influenced by the *Liber Pontificalis*.[6] In this, Jarecki partially opposes Schlotheuber, who identified in Adam's work the influence of Gregory the Great's *Regula Pastoralis*, especially as regards the structure of each *vita*. For her, the four orienting questions for the composition of the *Gesta*'s biographies follow the pattern of the *Regula*: how the bishop came into office (*qualiter ad culmen regiminis veniat*); how did he live (*qualiter vivat*); what did he teach (*qualiter doceat*); and was the bishop constantly conscious of his weakness?[7] Jarecki, on the other hand, considers that although the influence of the *Regula* cannot be denied, it does not sufficiently explain certain recurring elements in Adam's descriptions.[8] However, this influence, both authors agree, can be clearly identified in Adam's comments on Archbishop Hoger, where readers are informed that "Unde fuerit aut qualiter vixerit, Deo cognitum est" (whence he came and how he lived is known only to God),[9] thus referring to Gregory the Great's *Regula* and its formula.[10]

However, both Schlotheuber and Jarecki seem to ignore the fact that despite the evident influence of both the *Liber Pontificalis* and the *Regula Pastoralis*, this does not mean that Adam did not also use his own particular organizing principles. Although Schlotheuber gestures in this direction by mentioning a larger tradition of *gestae episcoporum* in the eleventh century to which Adam's historiographical narrative can be compared, she reduces the weight of Adam's own creative concept in favour of his submission to the general model presented by the *Regula* (as the foremost example of the *gestae episcoporum* genre).[11] Accordingly, even the lengthy biographical description of Adalbert's reign had its equivalent in the *Gesta episcoporum Leodiensium* by Anselm of Liège,[12] although Schlotheuber agrees that it generally follows the wider tradition of the

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6 As in Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 63. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*.

7 Schlotheuber, "Persönlichkeitsdarstellung," 506–7.

8 Jarecki, *Die Vorstellungen*, 66–67.

9 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 52 (bk. I, ch. 51). Tschan's translation is found on p. 46.

10 According to Schlotheuber ("Persönlichkeitsdarstellung," 507), "[b]ei Erzbischof Hoger (909–915) merkt Adam direkt im Anschluß an die Palliumsübergabe durch Papst Sergius III. und die Übergabe des Bischofsstabs durch Ludwig das Kind an: *Unde fuerit aut qualiter vixerit, deo cognitum est*. Möglicherweise wollte Adam das Fehlen von Informationen kennzeichnen, ohne deshalb seine Stoffgliederung aufzugeben. Wenn Adam von Bremen sich bei der Gestaltung der Viten grundsätzlich an den Fragen der Regula pastoralis orientierte, die über die *Sedit-* oder *Construxit-*Formeln des Liber Pontificalis hinaus der Darstellung erweiterte Möglichkeiten boten, ließen sich auch die Auswahlkriterien erklären, nach denen er die Vita Anskari und die Vita Rimberti kürzte, denn von den dort überlieferten Kindheits- und Jugenderzählungen nahm er nichts auf."

11 Schlotheuber, "Persönlichkeitsdarstellung," 501–2: "Wenngleich der Liber pontificalis traditionsbildend war, so hatte sich doch bis zur Mitte des 11. Jahrhunderts bereits eine reiche Tradition der Bistumsgeschichtsschreibung entwickelt, auf die Adam von Bremen für sein Vorhaben zurückgreifen konnte. Im lotharingisch-westfränkischen Raum waren beispielsweise die Gesta episcoporum von Cambrai entstanden, die Gesta episcoporum von V erdun und die Geschichte der Reimser Kirche."

12 Schlotheuber, "Persönlichkeitsdarstellung," 502: "In Aufbau und Anlage durchaus vergleichbar mit der Hamburgischen Kirchengeschichte bietet die zwischen 1052 und 1056 entstandene Lüttich er Bischofsgeschichte des Domkanonikers Anselm (gest. um 1056) ebenfalls topographisch-geo-

gesta episcoporum genre and is, thus, somewhat different from Adam's narrative model.[13] In short, both authors identify the singularity of Adam's historiographical composition, and yet try to find the explanation for his choices by looking outside his own work. This leads them to concentrate their studies on the analysis of the ethical elements within Adam's narrative without considering the implications of such elements for his general concept of history. Specifically, they disregard Adam's intention to produce a narrative that connects the particular historical process and role of the archdiocese with a universal and theologically understood history.

Schlotheuber has already pointed out the role of the narrative of virtues and vices in the *gesta episcoporum* genre, and she concludes that Adam employs the notion of a *catalogus virtutum* as a pattern in all of the archbishops' biographies within his narrative.[14] I believe, however, that Adam goes a step further than the formulaic construction of a list of bishops' deeds, and instead sees the historical experience of the Hamburg–Bremen archdiocese within an overarching universal history. If this is the case, then these lists of virtues acquire a new significance, as they might influence the course of events. Despite the debate promoted by Bagge and Schlotheuber as to whether there is a change, in a modern sense, in Adalbert's character and psychology, the fact is that for Adam, recent history and especially the misfortunes of the archdiocese under Adalbert's reign are directly linked to the latter's morals and deeds. "Therefore, I shall so begin my narrative that everything can at once be perceived from his character."[15] Thus Adam states his understanding of the connection between the character's traits and the course of history. Furthermore, recourse to the notion of morals brings the narrative closer to the ethical problems presented by the tension between vice and virtue.

In medieval historiography, a link between the morals of the protagonists and the development of the historical experience is a relatively common feature. It can be found, for example, in Einhard's *Vita Karoli* and in Otto of Freising's historiographic oeuvre, especially in the *Gesta Friderici*. Furthermore, ecclesiastical literature, both historiography and hagiography, not to mention theology and philosophy, frequently establishes an association between the exercise of virtue and the positive development of the history of the Church and of Christianity. This is usually interpreted through divine favour or (pos-

graphische Beschreibungen. Wirken Anselms erste Bischofsviten mit ihren knappen Nachrichten zur Lütticher Bistumsgeschichte noch recht formelhaft, so weitete er die letzte Vita des ihm persönlich bekannten Bischofs Wazo (1042–1048) zu einer echten Biographie aus, die die verschiedenen Aspekte bischöflichen Wirkens nach außen und nach innen berücksichtigte."

13 Schlotheuber, "Persönlichkeitsdarstellung," 502: "Insgesamt bleibt die positive Würdigung dieses Lütticher Erzbischofs aber ganz im traditionellen Rahmen einer hochmittelalterlichen Bischofsvita."

14 Schlotheuber, "Persönlichkeitsdarstellung," 505–6: "Auf die lnvestiturmodalitäten folgt eine kurze Charakteristik der Person in Form einer Aufzählung oder Verknüpfung von Tugenden im Sinne eines *Catalogus virtutum*."

15 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 115. "Igitur narrationis initium tale faciam, ut statim ex moribus eius possint omnia cognosci." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 143–44 (bk. III, ch. 1).

itive) apocalyptical expectations.[16] The *Gesta Hammaburgensis* shares this tendency, albeit in its own particular way.

Right at the beginning, while discussing the Saxons and their characteristics, Adam seems to refer to virtue as a distinctive feature of his narrative's subjects, implying that, even before the Christianization of the people, there was a predisposition towards the central role that the Saxon diocese of Hamburg–Bremen would play in a later period. We can see this when he writes that "in the interest of upright morals they strove to have many useful and, according to the natural law, honorable regulations, which could be very helpful to them in meriting true happiness if they were not ignorant of their Creator and strangers to the truth of His worship."[17] If we consider the polysemy of the term *beatitudo*, then the connection between morals and salvation history becomes evident. In addition, Adam's decision to portray the Saxons' morals in a positive light demonstrates his concern with securing the leading role of his archdiocese, which later becomes the metropolitan see not only for northern Saxony, but also for the Slavic and Scandinavian territories. In a way, by doing so, he also creates a basis for the idea that Hamburg–Bremen will, so long as it continues to be Christian, secure its connection to salvation history, despite having been ruled by less than ideal archbishops, like Hermann, or even Adalbert.

Adam shows a similar approach to the Slavic population in Jumne, though does not seem to imply that they had the same kind of connection to salvation history as the Saxons, except in so far as they fell under Hamburg–Bremen's jurisdiction in accordance with the *legatio gentium*. Referring to the people of Jumne, he declares that "so far as morals and hospitality are concerned, a more honorable or kindlier folk cannot be found."[18] This passage, found along with the extensive description of the Slavs in the second book of the *Gesta*, presents a subjective link between Christianization and the course of history in that it suggests the need for Jumne's population to be brought to the Christian religion. Indeed, by presenting the Slavs of Jumne as naturally virtuous, Adam also questions why the Christian presence in Jumne is not further promoted by the Church of Hamburg–Bremen. The answer seems to be given later in the *Gesta*, again with a reference to virtue. In *scholium* twenty-eight, which is placed as a com-

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16 I discussed the theme of morality in twelfth-century historiography and epistolary sources during my PhD research on political virtues. I suggested there that the virtues of the characters discussed in the sources affected the authors' concepts and representation of the correct course of history, as well their expectations of the future—and ultimately, the end of the world. For an extended discussion with references, see Grzybowski, "Politische Tugendvorstellungen." The influence of Einhard's *Vita Caroli* on Adam of Bremen's *Gesta*, especially in the section concerning Adalbert, was briefly explored by Schlotheuber, "Persönlichkeitsdarstellung," 511, 528.

17 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 10. "Et multa utilia atque secundum legem naturae honesta in morum probitate studuerunt habere; quae eis ad veram beatitudinem promerendam proficere potuissent, si ignorantiam creatoris sui non haberent et a veritate culturae illius non essent alieni." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 8 (bk. I, ch. 6).

18 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 67. "Omnes enim adhuc paganicis ritibus oberrant, ceterum moribus et hospitalitate nulla gens honestior aut benignior poterit inveniri." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 79.

mentary to the forty-second chapter of book two, Adam states that "Dietrich was the margrave of the Slavs whose villainy forced them to become rebels."[19] This remark is placed along with the description of the Slavic revolts during the episcopate of Libentius I, which marked a big setback for the Christian presence and meant a new threat to the diocese of Hamburg.[20] The connection to the vice of the margrave is evident: it was the *ignavia*—translated by Tschan as "villainy"— that pushed the Slavs back into paganism and pressed them to commit the acts of violence described in the *Gesta*. This view, that the problems in the Christianization of the Slavs had their source in the vices of the local nobility, is later returned to by Adam when he mentions the situation between the archdiocese and the Slavic populations at the end of Bezelin's episcopate: "It is clear [...] that because of the efforts of the priests the Christian religion would long ago have become strong there if the avarice of the princes had not hindered the conversion of the folk."[21] Adam's accusation is very clear: the main obstacle to the Christianization of the Slavic population—represented by the Winuli in this passage—is the avarice, that is, the vice, of the Saxon nobility. The idea that Adam proposes is that both the virtuous priests and the virtuous pagans were favourable to the Christianization of the Slavs, but they were hindered by the wickedness of powerful local rulers.

Thus, by the second book the *Gesta*, Adam establishes a narrative pattern relating to the Christianization of northern Europe which is intrinsically influenced by moral categories. Virtuous behaviours—which Adam interprets in quite a broad sense, not following a specific catalogue of virtues and vices[22]—are linked with success in the Christianization enterprise, even when they are found among the non-Christianized populations. Vice, however, corrupts and impedes the flourishing of the *legatio gentium*, regardless of who is the vicious party, whether a member of the clergy or a noble layman—although it seems that only the vices of the Christians have a negative influence over the Christianization of pagans. This means that Adam's narrative use of ethical categories has not only been influenced by traditional biographical or panegyric literature. On the contrary, he also uses it to reflect on the theoretical relationship between moral philosophy within the Christian theological tradition and the Christian interpretation of history that points to its progressive and salvational character. If this is true, then it potentially and profoundly changes the way in which the descriptions of the characters in the *Gesta* should be interpreted. And so, for example, the question of whether Adalbert's charac-

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19 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 83. "Theodericus erat marchio Sclavorum, cuius ignavia coegit eos fieri desertores." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 102 (bk. II, ch. 42, Schol. 28).

20 According to Adam, the Slavs attacked Hamburg and took many clerics and other inhabitants of the see as slaves. He also refers to an account by Sven Estridsen, who mentions the martyrdom of sixty clerics at their hands. See Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 103–104 (bk. II, ch. 43).

21 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 105–6. "videtur mihi iam dudum studio sacerdotum christianam religionem ibidem convaluisse, si conversionem gentis avaricia principum non prepediret." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 133 (bk. II, ch. 71).

22 Eva Schlotheuber postulates the idea of a *catalogum virtutum* in connection with the archbishops' biographies. She suggests the inspiration for this catalogue to be Isidore of Sevilla and also Ambrose, archbishop of Milan. Schlotheuber, "Persönlichkeitsdarstellung," 506, 517, 528.

ter suffered a progressive change or a transformation similar to that which appears in modern biographies—this being the central element discussed by Bagge and Schlotheuber—becomes less significant. Instead, attention is called to the fact that because the archbishop gave in to vice early on, his episcopacy was, in some sense, destined to face difficulties in carrying out the *legatio gentium*.

It seems to me that it is these aspects of Adam's thinking that are especially visible in his treatment of the populations to be Christianized under the auspices of Hamburg–Bremen's *legatio*. The role of the archbishops' virtue in these contexts is very clear. The leader of the Church should exercise virtue, which enables him to rule successfully and his missionary efforts to flourish. On the other hand, his vice poses a real threat to the development of the Christian faith among the northern populations, as the description of Archbishop Hermann's episcopacy illustrates. There is no mention of Hermann's activities in the *legatio gentium*. The only positive account regarding his rule concerns the calling of musicians to the church choir, and Adam's final words demonstrate his contempt: "Making little of everything he found in the diocese, the archbishop first of all brought to Bremen the music master Guido, at whose instance he reformed the chant and cloistral discipline. Of the archbishop's efforts this was the only one that was successful. […] Thus also did the great high priest Heli, because he did not restrain his own from rapine, displease, even in many good deeds, God, to whom belongs revenge."[23] Adam does not connect Hermann to any of the typical vices found in medieval catalogues, but mentions specifically the fact that the archbishop plundered his diocese and that, although he devised the building of defensive walls around Bremen, he never completed them. His vice, understood in a broad sense, hindered the flourishing of the diocese and marked his disinterest in the *legatio gentium*.

In the fourth book of the *Gesta*, we recurrently find vice and virtue associated with the peoples living in Scandinavia and around the Baltic Sea. It is possible to identify a pattern in the treatment of these communities: it seems that the further they are from the centre of the archdiocese, the more exotic is the way in which they are presented, but also the more virtuous they seem to be. Thus, while writing about the Danes in the sixth chapter of the *descriptio*, Adam states that "they have no faith in one another, and as soon as one of them catches another, he mercilessly sells him into slavery either to one of his fellows or to a barbarian. In many other respects, indeed, both in their laws and in their customs, do the Danes run contrary to what is fair and good."[24] He adds these words to a description of the situation in Sjaelland (Zealand)—a centre of piracy he says, which is promoted by the Danish king. Adam also presents his readers with an

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23 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 102–3. "Pontifex igitur parvipendens omnia, quae in episcopatu invenit, primo quidem musicum Gruidonem adduxit Bremam, cuius instancia correxit melodiam et claustralem disciplinam. Quod solum ex operibus eius prospere cessit. […] Ita ille magnus pontifex Heli, dum suos a rapina non corripuit, etiam in bonis aliquibus Deo ultionum displicuit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 128–29 (bk. II, ch. 68).

24 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 190. "fide nulla utrique ad invicem sunt, et sine misericordia quisque alterum, mox ut ceperit, in ius famulicii vel socio vendit vel barbaro. Et multa quidem alia tam in legibus quam in moribus aequo bonoque contraria Dani habent. Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 233 (bk. IV, ch. 6).

explanation of the term "Viking" at this point, a people who are a threat to Christianity. From the perspective of my hypothesis, the connection of these pirates with the vices that hinder the expansion of Christianity into Scandinavia certainly explains the many episodes of destruction by marauding Vikings that Adam includes in his text, especially the attacks on Hamburg and the great danger they presented to the *legatio gentium*. When he later writes about the population of Samland, however—which he identifies as an island inhabited by Sembi or Prussians—Adam depicts them as friendly and almost ascetic: "Many praiseworthy things could be said about these peoples with respect to their morals, if only they had the faith of Christ whose missionaries they cruelly persecute. At their hands Adalbert, the illustrious bishop of the Bohemians, was crowned with martyrdom. Although they share everything else with our people, they prohibit only, to this very day indeed, access to their groves and springs which, they aver, are polluted by the entry of Christians."[25] This passage interestingly differs from Adam's treatment of the Danish pirates in Sjaelland. Readers are presented with a scenario of resistance to Christianization and the work of Christian missionaries, exemplified by the chronicler's mention of Adalbert of Prague's martyrdom. However, by pointing out the friendliness and good morals of these people, Adam seems to imply—expressed in the wish "if only they had the faith of Christ"—that there should be an increased effort in their Christianization.

Two final examples regarding moral qualities suffice to further strengthen my argument. In the eighth chapter, Adam mentions the creation of the bishoprics of Lund and Dalby in Skåne by Sven Estridsen (Skåne had earlier not been provided with a bishop, and according to Adam was visited only occasionally by bishops of other regions). Sven appointed Henry to Lund, and Dalby was given to Egino, who was consecrated by Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg–Bremen.[26] It is in connection with Henry and Egino that Adam elaborates on the presence, or absence, of moral virtue. He writes: "Henry had previously been bishop in the Orkneys and, it is related, the keeper of King Canute's treasure in England. Bringing this treasure over to Denmark, Henry spent his life in voluptuousness. About him it is even stated that, reveling in the pestiferous practice of drinking his belly full, he at last suffocated and burst."[27] Adam clearly points to the bishop's gluttony. The fact that he associates it with Henry's origins in the Orkneys and England, and also with not being consecrated by the archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen, clearly demonstrates that Adam believes that clergy acting in Scandinavia without the consent of the archbishopric—that is, without respecting the premise of the *legatio*

25 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 199. "Multa possent dici ex illis populis laudabilia in moribus, si haberent solam fidem Christi, cuius predicatores immaniter persecuntur. Apud illos martyrio coronatus est illustris Boemiorum episcopus Adalbertus. Usque hodie profecto inter illos, cum cetera omnia sint communia nostris, solus prohibetur accessus lucorum et fontium, quos autumant pollui christianorum accessu." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 246 (bk. IV, ch. 18).

26 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 235–36 (bk. IV, ch. 8).

27 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 192. "Heinricus apud Orchadas ante fuit episcopus, isque in Anglia sacellarius Chnud regis fuisse narratur; euius tesauros in Daniam perferens luxuriose vitam peregit. De quo narrant etiam, quod pestifera consuetudine delectatus inebriandi ventris tandem suffocatus crepuit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 236 (bk. IV, ch. 8).

gentium—are, in fact, obstacles to the accomplishment of Hamburg–Bremen's task and therefore to the coming of the end of history. This is underlined by the contrasting image of Egino, the bishop of Dalby, consecrated by Adalbert. "Egino was a man who knew letters and was remarkable for his chastity, he at that very time also directed his every effort ardently to the conversion of the pagans. On this account this man won to Christ many people hitherto given to the worship of idols […]. They all are said to have been moved to tears by his preaching and […] they immediately broke up their idols and of their own accord hastened to be baptized."[28] Adam adds that "the bishop, declining the offerings, taught them to build churches with that money, to succor the needy, and to ransom captives."[29] This description of Egino certainly represents Adam's ideal in connection with the *legatio gentium*. He is a virtuous man, concerned with the Christianization of pagans, and, in opposition to Henry, does not seek riches—or food or drink—for himself, but guides the newly converted to spend their money on the work of the *legatio*. Egino's virtues—his *sapientia* and *castitate*—not only help to achieve salvation for himself but are also reflected in his acts to further the salvation of the pagans, and therefore support the course of history in general.

Finally, while writing about the situation in Norway in chapter thirty-one of the fourth book, Adam again refers to the vice of the priests as a hindrance to the spread of Christianity among a virtuous people. The Norwegians "have already learned to love the truth and peace and to be content with their poverty […]. They also are the most continent of all mortals, with all diligence prizing frugality and modesty, both as to their food and to their morals."[30] This particular description follows a larger report on the land and culture of the people living in Norway. In it, Adam mentions that these people showed some virtue, or at least a lack of vice, even before Christianization: they do not seem to have the *invidia* of their Swedish neighbours and, due to the harsh circumstances of the land, their *fortitudo* is striking.[31] But again, just as with Hermann and Adalbert in Hamburg–Bremen, or Henry in Lund, the vice of the priests poses an obstacle to the *legatio*.

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28 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 192. "Egino vero cum esset vir sapiens in litteris et castitate insignis, tunc etiam totum studium eius exarsit in conversione paganorum. Quapropter multos adhuc populos ydolorum cultui deditos ille vir Christo lucratus est, illos presertim barbaros, qui Pleicani dicuntur, et qui in Hulmo insula degunt affines Gothis. Qui omnes dicuntur ad eius predicationem conversi ad lacrimas penitentiam sui erroris ita monstrasse, ut confractis statim ydolis ultro certarent ad baptismum." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 236 (bk. IV, ch. 8).

29 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 192. "Quod renuens episcopus docuit eos ex eadem pecunia fabricare ecclesias, egenos alere [ac] redimere captivos, qui multi sunt in illis partibus." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 236 (bk. IV, ch. 8).

30 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 211. "Post susceptam vero christianitatem melioribus imbuti scolis didicerunt iam pacem et veritatem diligere, paupertate sua contenti esse, immo quae habent collecta spargere, non ut prius sparsa colligere. Cumque nefandis artibus maleficiorum omnes ab initio servirent, nunc vero cum apostolo simpliciter confitentur Christum et hunc crucifixum. Sunt etiam continentissimi omnium mortalium, tam in cibis quam in moribus parcitatem modestiamque summopere diligentes." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 264 (bk. IV, ch. 31).

31 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 264 (bk. IV, ch. 31).

The Norwegians' "excellent moral character, as I have learned, is therefore corrupted only by priestly avarice,"[32] as Adam explicitly states.

These descriptions of the northern populations that draw on the theme of moral quality, and particularly the appearance of this theme in Adam's *Descriptio insularum Aquilonis*, seem to show a strong connection to the author's concept of history, which in turn echoes wider medieval theories. That the guiding element of the *Gesta* is closely attached to general ideas of salvation and the end of times certainly points to the influence of Augustinian ideas in Adam's thought, even if defining Adam's historical writing as properly Augustinian might be an overstatement. In addition to seeing the *Gesta*'s use of vice and virtue as the expression of Augustinian influence, however, there also seems to be a link between these ethical elements and the narrative's construction of religious and cultural identities.[33]

Identities: Adam and the Christian Woman

The construction of identities in medieval historiography has received scholarly attention since at least the end of the twentieth century, including in studies of Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis.* We have already met some of these in the first chapter, in the context of the chronicler's treatment of the pre-Christian religious landscape of northern Europe. All these studies look into the identities created or proposed by Adam's historical narrative, and although they tend to point towards the relationship of character and the idea of the *legatio gentium* (especially evident in Scior's work), there is still work to be done. Scior looks at Adam's self-ascribing categories of identity against his categories of otherness. The *legatio* here appears as an identity element but loses its centrality in Adam's historical conceptualization in favour of a sense of belonging firstly to the ecclesiastical institution of Hamburg–Bremen, and then to its spatial context and also its political and cultural community. Thus the *legatio gentium*, which is clearly central to Adam's historical argument, appears in Scior's study only as a sort of by-product of the institutional identity orbiting the archdiocese.

David Fraesdorff has a similar approach to the *Gesta*, concentrating his analysis on the construction of strangeness, both cultural and religious, in the narrative. Through these constructions, which are widely based on ancient models, the text creates a sense of barbarism around the northern regions: the farther the people live from Hamburg, the more barbarous they are. Thus Fraesdorff poses a connection between the identity categories used by Adam and his general concept of salvation history in which he

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32 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 212. "Apud illos [igitur] tanta morum insignia, ut compertum habeo, sola sacerdotum corrumpuntur avaricia." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 264 (bk. IV, ch. 31).

33 On the construction of identities in Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, see Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*; Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*; Goetz, "Constructing the Past"; Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen*; and Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität*. Against my position, Timothy Barnwell ("Fragmented Identities") points out that all the perspectives on identity formation in the *Gesta* need to be considered, without suggesting that an underlying concept can be identified.

equates the barbarian peoples on the edge of the world with the end-of-time concepts of Gog and Magog. However, instead of a wish for Christ's return and the end of history through the spread of the Christian message to the farthest regions of the north, Fraesdorff suggests that Adam actually opposes such an idea, and therefore he creates an image of monstrosity and barbarism in the regions he identifies with the end of the world. Finally, Thomas Foerster concentrates on the idea of the *magister*'s construction of an identity of the northern pagans based on classical elements that Adam updates to fit the context of his own account.

These are just some examples, but they illustrate the way the *Gesta* has been read as a historiographical narrative that depicts a variety of cultural, political, and, above all, religious identities. They are also typical of approaches to identity formation that contrast clearly defined categories in the narrative, usually presented as an opposition between the familiar and the unknown, both in markedly spatial and conceptual frameworks. In the following pages, I will use a different approach to the identity construction Adam advances in his work, one that reflects his conceptual framework as regards the Christianization of the northern territories of medieval Europe. My analysis focuses on the reference to and description of female characters, and their role in connection to the *Gesta*'s theoretical framework of the *legatio gentium* and salvation history.[34]

The following analysis separates the women mentioned in Adam's *Gesta* into two groups, as I believe in this way their roles in the narrative become clearer and the issue of identity construction in connection with the Christianization of Scandinavia becomes more evident. First, I analyze examples of women who are presented positively. We then turn our attention to some who are perceived as negative models. If we consider that Adam wrote partly as a guide for Liemar and future rulers over Hamburg–Bremen, then it is understandable that positive examples are more abundant, both male and female characters alike. Whether the findings in the following pages therefore relate only to women—which I doubt—is discussed at the end of the chapter.

The first female character in the *Gesta* is "a certain venerable matron, named Ikia."[35] According to the narrative, she gave the missionary bishop and founder of the archdiocese, Ansgar, an estate called Ramelsloh after the episcopal see in Hamburg was destroyed by Scandinavian raiders. This venerable Ikia thus acts in the account as a saviour of the Hamburg diocese, in that through her donation she supports the *legatio gentium*, the saintly founder, and also the relics that Ansgar recovered from Hamburg during his escape from the Scandinavian attackers. This is made clear by Adam when he explains that Ansgar was abandoned to poverty after the destruction of Hamburg, since he had already lost control over the monastery of Turholz. This had been previously granted to him when he became involved with the Christianization of the Scan-

34 Here, we touch on the fields of women's history or gender studies. However, my concern is with Adam's ideas regarding his historical narrative, and I see these characters as a vehicle by which to understand his broader concepts. On the other hand, I would also like to encourage further exploration of these fields with Adam's narrative.

35 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 28. "Unde contigit, ut predium, quod Ramsolan dicitur, a quadam venerabili matrona susceperit nomine Ikia." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 29 (bk. I, ch. 23).

dinavians and Slavs, but after the imperial division of 843 had fallen within Charles the Bald's territory.[36] By receiving the donation of property from Ikia, Ansgar again became able to organize his efforts toward the *legatio*. He founded a monastery in Ramelsloh and there deposited relics, including those of Sixtus and Sinicius. With the revenue from Ramelsloh he was able to finance further work among the Nordalbingians and Scandinavians. Finally, according to the *Gesta*, Ramelsloh also served as a place of refuge for the Christians scattered after the destruction of the Hamburg diocese.[37] There are only a few references to Ikia herself in Adam's account, and yet she is of fundamental importance to his historical plot. She is identified only as a *venerabili matrona*—worthy mother—without any further information on her role in Saxon society or her interactions with Ansgar which resulted in this significant donation. Due to the incomplete information transmitted in the narrative, it is not possible to determine whether Adam had any knowledge of her family status or her acquaintances, so it can be safely assumed that when he characterizes Ikia as a *matrona*, he refers to her role as mother of the ecclesiastical community of Ramelsloh.

However, she functions as a mother not only because of the spiritual family she created through her donation and the subsequent founding of the monastery in Ramelsloh, but also because of her role as "nourisher" of Saint Ansgar, for whom her generosity meant survival. The picture thus created by the text generally corresponds to the idea of *matrona* explored by Georges Duby in the 1980s.[38] But it presents some special features when compared to Duby's model in that, for him, at the turn of the twelfth century the *matrona* ideal starts to define the medieval woman. In the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, however, Adam does not present Ikia as a feminine ideal, but rather as an ideal of piety. He certainly stylizes his narrative material and thus creates the idea of a good woman. However, the dominating theme in this passage is not Ikia's womanhood or her role as mother—as Duby's schematic interpretation would suggest—but her dedication to the *legatio gentium*, the support she provides to the saint, and the image of piety her acts promote in Ramelsloh's monastic community.

This view of Adam's approach to female characters in the archdiocese's past can be further clarified by the next example. This again involves the donation of some property to Ansgar, but this time by a woman called Liutgard. Ansgar once more decides to employ its resources in the work of the *legatio gentium*, and to found a female congregation at

36 "Hac inter fratres sortita [regni] divisione, Turholz [monasterium] concessit in partem Karoli, et sic alienatum est a iure sancti Ansgarii." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 29 (bk. I, ch. 22).

37 "Hic locus in episcopatu Ferdensi positus, ab Hammaburg disparatur tribus rastis. Ibi sanctus Dei cenobium constituens reliquias sanctorum confessorum Syxti et Sinnicii locavit et alia patrocinia, quae ab Hammaburg portavit fugiens. Ibi gregem profugum collegit et depulsos a gentilibus socios retinuit in eo portu. Ab eo loco Hammaburgensem ecclesiam visitans Nordalbingos in fide reformavit, quos ante persecutio turbavit. Tum quoque ne legatio gentium sua quapiam tarditate frigesceret, predicatores misit in Daniam; Hartgarium vero heremitam direxit in Sueoniam." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 29–30 (bk. I, ch. 23).

38 See, for example, Georges Duby, *Mâle Moyen Âge*.

Bassum. Adam says that "a matron devoted to Christ"[39] offered her entire patrimony to the heavenly spouse and thus helped to nurture a great sanctuary of chastity.[40] Unlike the cloister founded at Ramelsloh by Ikia's donation, Adam does not expressly associate the nunnery in Bassum with the *legatio* to the Nordic peoples.[41] Rather, he adds it to the list of Ansgar's achievements, placing it between the monastic foundations in Ramelsloh and Bremen, as well as the establishment of hospitals to care for the poor and the sick.

This brings another piece of context to light. While the story around Ikia focuses particularly on Ansgar's activities in the conversion of the northern peoples, Liutgard's example emphasizes the archbishop's concerns within the diocese, both regarding the strengthening of Christianity—hinted at by the mention of the virtues practised in the nunnery, hospitals, and monastery—and his expansion of the ecclesiastical infrastructure. Again, this is not about women or womanhood in itself, but about what they bring to the diocese and the *legatio*,[42] and to what end they are referred to by Adam as auxiliaries to the archbishops, and therefore to the diocese itself. This finally ascribes them a role in the scheme of salvation history by which Adam composed the *Gesta*. However, while he is not making a statement about femininity in general, gender is not insignificant, for Adam uses the women to take up an important point regarding Christianity. His praise of the chastity of the members of the Bassum nunnery under Liutgard leads us to this interpretation. *Castitas* is a recurrent theme in Adam's work, with chastity as an ideal and *fornicatio* as a common practice in the community of Bremen, including the religious groups rebuked and reformed by the archbishops later in the narrative. The descriptions of Liutgard and Ikia share certain similarities. Liutgard is also called *devota Christi matrona*,[43] a mother devoted to Christ, although in this case, too, we should understand her motherhood in the spiritual sense. This later becomes apparent when Adam claims that the nunnery in Bassum sustained a *magnum chorum castitatis* through her leadership. It is thus clear that Liutgard not only sacrificed all her possessions in favour of the nunnery, but also acted as its leader, promoting the virtuous behaviour of the community and winning Adam's praise. It is undeniable that piety and Christian ideals again guide the narrative in this passage.

For our third example, we need to turn to Countess Emma. She appears in several chapters of the second book and is thus the woman most frequently mentioned in the *Gesta*. She is first found in the forty-sixth chapter of the second book, in the account of the death of Benno (Bernhard I), Duke of Saxony, and his brother, Count Liudger, in the twenty-second year of Archbishop Libentius's rule over Hamburg–Bremen. Emma is

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39 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 33. "devota Christi matrona" Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 26 (bk. I, ch. 30).

40 "Ubi devota Christi matrona Liutgart totum patrimonium suum offerens celesti sponso magnum chorum castitatis suo ducatu nutrivit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 36 (bk. I, ch. 30).

41 See this direct association in 72n37.

42 Considering that the strengthening of the Christian faith through virtues promoted in the nunnery needs to be interpreted within Adam's general conception of the *legatio*, as I argued in chapter 3.

43 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 36 (bk. I, ch. 30).

Count Liudger's *uxore venerabili*[44] and she seems to be mentioned because she, together with her husband, had done much good toward the Church in Bremen.[45] Later, Adam explains what the countess had funded through her donations, but at her first appearance the reader does not yet know anything about her, except that she was married to the duke's brother, was widowed, and was a "venerable wife." The manner in which Adam presents Emma, however—informing his readers of her good deeds immediately after referring to her as venerable—suggests that her praiseworthiness is primarily due to her own actions, and not because of her role as the wife of Count Liudger.

This becomes clearer when Adam writes in more detail about Emma's activities in support of the Church in Bremen. During Libentius I's tenure, she is said to have asked her nephews, Duke Bernhard II of Saxony and his brother Thietmar, to promote good deeds in favour of the archdiocese. She herself had offered almost all of her fortune to the Church, and she is said to have looked after the Church's sons, *ut sui essent*.[46] As is evident, here are some of the above-mentioned traits that Adam connects with the ideal behaviour of a Christian woman. And again, although the characters are female, they clearly present an ideal attached not only to women, but to Christians in general. Thus, Adam explores some of his fundamental concepts regarding Christianity through female characters, although this should not be interpreted, I believe, as an attempt to describe a notion of gendered Christianity in the *Gesta*. The first of these character traits, dedication to the Church, is evident through Emma's support of the archbishop's work—especially through her donations and intercession with the Saxon nobility. Like Ikia and Liutgard, Emma also deeds her belongings to the Bremen Church. However, an escalation in the narrative strategies is clearly identifiable regarding Emma's activities when compared to the accounts of Ikia and Liutgard. The countess not only gives her own wealth to the archdiocese, but also urges her nephew, the duke of Saxony, to support the divine work of the *legatio*, thus promoting a joint effort to expand the Christian presence in the north. It is important to stress that Emma and the nobility she represents are precisely those characters that Adam criticizes for their avarice, which disrupts the archbishops' Christianization work among the Slavs.[47] However, with Emma and her nephew, Adam supplies a positive counterpoint to these other negative exemplars.

Indirectly, Emma's role as *matrona* can equally be identified in the statement regarding her consideration toward the *ecclesiae filios*, although unlike Liutgard and Ikia, Adam does not mention any new foundations that originated from her donations. Nonethe-

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44 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 106 (bk. II, ch. 46).

45 According to "Anno archiepiscopi XXII. Benno dux Saxonum obiit, et Liudgerus, frater eius, qui cum uxore sua venerabili Emma Bremensi ecclesiae plurima fecerunt bona." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 106 (bk. II, ch. 46).

46 "Suo tempore Bernardus dux et frater eius Theodmarus ecelesiae nostrae multa bona fecerunt, exhortante piissima Emma, quae Bremensem ecclesiam valde dilexit suumque tesaurum Deo et genitrici eius ac sancto confessori Willehado fere totum optulit. Haec quoque pro dilectione pontificis omnes ecelesiae filios, ut sui essent, fovit." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 126–27 (bk. II, ch. 67).

47 See 69n21.

less, Emma deserves to be named *piissima*—that is, very pious. Thus, the connection to Adam's ideals of Christianity is established, and his concepts regarding the proper values of the Christian nobility are further stressed. In this way, he constructs a Christian identity in the *Gesta* through the positive intervention of female characters in support of the *legatio gentium* and the work of the archbishops.

Adam writes about Emma for yet a third time[48] when he reports on her death. In this passage, he speaks again of the donations that she had distributed among the poor and to the churches. Once more, he points out that Emma had sacrificed almost all of her fortune—which Adam now describes as huge (*ingentem*)—in this task. Among her donations to the Bremen Church, he finally informs his readers, were two estates given to the archbishopric: Stiepel, in the Ruhr region, and Lesum, where she spent her later years, just north of Bremen. This latter, however, seems to have never been under the archbishop's control, since it was a fief held by the countess, which fell back into imperial possession after her death. Adam actually accuses Emma's daughter of being responsible for this setback, and he confirms the imperial presence on the estate by placing Empress Gisela at the site shortly after Emma's passing. The many similarities with the earlier passages notwithstanding, Adam here adds a new aspect, which he had not previously explored: namely, the social position of the countess as an identity element of her character. Although Adam had already pointed out that Emma married Count Liudger, Bernhard I of Saxony's brother, it is only in reporting her death that he calls her *nobilissima senatrix* and thus explicitly writes about her social rank. If we look at the overall presentation of Countess Emma, we clearly see an image that develops in its portrayal of Adam's concept of a good Christian. First, she appears as the wife and widow of a count, the venerable spouse of a high-ranking member of the ducal family, and is praised for her kindness toward the Bremen Church. Then, in the second passage, it is said that she is extremely pious, for, among other things, she seeks to support the Church by urging her nephews to make donations (and, we might assume, to come to good terms with the archbishop, with whom the Billungs were constantly in dispute), and by caring for the sons of the Church. In the last passage, she gives away her belongings. In Emma's case, *nobilitas* seems to run parallel to *pietas* and the *reverentia* and *bonum* previously referred to by Adam, and is therefore intended primarily to indicate virtue rather than just social status. According to Adam's scheme, Emma does good things for the Bremen Church, consequently presenting herself as a pious woman, and thus earning the praise of both him and his readership. But conversely, we could also understand that Adam binds the *nobilitas* to Emma's piety and kindness, thus demanding a specific kind of demeanour and ideal behaviour from the nobility directly or indirectly involved with the *legatio gentium*. Namely, they should aid the Church, behave in a pious way, and make

48 "In diebus illis nobilissima senatrix Emma obiit, uxor quondam Liutgeri comitis [et soror Meginwerki, episcopi Podarburnensis], sed iam vidua per annos XL, totum fere quem habuit ingentem tesaurum pauperibus et ecclesiis dispersit. Corpus eius requiescit in Bremensi ecclesia, anima eius gaudeat in celesti requie. Illa dum adhuc viveret, Bremensi ecclesiae cortem Stiplaga iuxta Rhenum dedit. Lismona vero, nescio pro quo filiae delicto, in partem cessit imperatoris Conradi; pro qua re Gisla regina eo tempore visitavit Lismonam." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 138 (bk. II, ch. 80).

their possessions available, as well as support the activities of the *legatio*. It is by this that "true" nobility of character is acquired, or by which others recognize its possession.

All three examples explored here point in this direction. The same is also true elsewhere in Adam's work, as we saw in the discussion of virtue and vice and its impact on the Christianization project. As a last positive example, let us look at Adam's description of Queen Gunhild, widow of the Swedish king Anund Jakob,[49] who is described in a brief report by the chronicler as *sanctissima* and as a generous woman, hospitable, and a supporter of the clergy in Sweden.[50] Here we clearly recognize the same scheme as in other passages of the *Gesta*. It therefore seems safe to conclude that Adam pursues a clear goal in his historical narrative which proposes an idealized form of Christianity, which is partly presented through female characters. These women are not to be seen as his attempt to promote a feminine or a gendered form of Christianity; on the contrary, they function as a means for him to make his point regarding the *legatio gentium*. The example of Queen Gunhild, although very brief, summarizes well his view regarding the conjunction of virtues, faith, and the work of the *legatio*. During Archbishop Adalbert's rule, the missionary activities and clerical presence in Sweden experienced major setbacks because, according to Adam, of King Emund the Old's favour to Anglo-Saxon clergy.[51] The future king Stenkil and Queen Gunhild alone kept their fidelity to the archbishopric of Hamburg–Bremen, favouring the Saxon clergy sent by Adalbert to Sweden but rejected by Emund the Old. By her actions and her virtues, Gunhild re-establishes the right order of things as regards ecclesiastical organization in Sweden. Considering the consequences for salvation history of her acts toward the missionaries of Hamburg–Bremen, it is no surprise that Adam calls her *sanctissima*—most blessed. This is particularly interesting given that Gunhild is presented earlier by Adam as someone who, through her marriage to Sven Estridsen, causes disruption in the Danish kingdom.[52] This underlines how their changing connection to Adam's major plot narrative also changes his opinion of the characters in his account.

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49 There is actually some dispute about this, but I have decided to follow Adam's belief that this Gunhild was married to Anund Jakob. See Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 157 (bk. III, ch. 16, Schol. 66).

50 "Is [Stenkil] solus misericordia motus super fratres optulit eis munera transmisitque eos per montana Suedorum salvos usque ad sanctissimam Gunhild reginam, quae a rege Danorum pro consanguinitate separata in prediis suis trans Daniam commorata est, hospitalitati elemosinisque vacans et ceteris operibus sanctitatis insistens. Ea legatos cum ingenti honore quasi a Deo missos recipiens magna per eos xenia misit archiepiscopo." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 157 (bk. III, ch. 15).

51 "Cum haec ibi gesta essent, christianissimus rex Sueonum Iacobus migravit e seculo, et successit ei frater eius Emund pessimus. Nam iste a concubina Olaph natus erat, et cum baptizatus esset, non multum de nostra religione curavit. Habuitque secum quendam episcopum nomine Osmund, acephalum. […] Tunc veniens in Suediam iactavit se a papa consecratum in illas partes archiepiscopum." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 155–56 (bk. III, ch. 15).

52 See 76n57. There is some dispute as to Gunhild's identity, since Adam may have been confused. Based on *scholium* 66, Gunhild was the widow of King Anund Jakob, and not to be confused with Gude, whom Thore killed.

Opposing these women and the Christian ideals they represent are negative examples, which in the text are structured quite differently. Adam provides his readers with only brief information about the "venerable women" in his account, but they are usually presented in such a way that they can be located quite precisely, at least in terms of their name and actions, but sometimes also their social rank. By contrast, when he writes about women who are seen as bad examples, he tends toward generalized and anonymous depictions, thus giving the impression that the reported material might be universally true. This is how Adam censures Archbishop Adalbert in the third book, criticizing his distribution of the tithe revenues to laymen: "The episcopal estates and the tithes of the churches, from which the clergy, the widows, and the needy ought to have been supported, all now fell to the use of laymen, so that to this day courtesans and brigands live luxuriously on the goods of the Church, the while holding the bishop and all the ministers of the altar in derision."[53] This passage clearly shows Adam insulting the parties who profited from Adalbert's extensive donations, so should therefore not be taken as literally true. Rather, it shows us Adam's thinking on the matter. When he speaks of courtesans (*meretrices*), he is not referring literally to prostitutes, but to women who do not rise to the standards he believes are correct and necessary for the success of the *legatio*. These women that Adam insults receive money from the archbishop to live in luxury, rather than spending their private wealth in support of the Church in accordance with Adam's ideal. He writes in the same manner about the so-called "robbery" of the archbishopric's altars. The account refers to Adalbert's decree to collect all the church jewellery and melt it down for sale so as to acquire land or rights at the royal court.[54] These items of gold and precious stones had been given to the Church by Countess Emma. The gold, Adam writes, went to pay the archbishop's debts, but the gems were given by unidentified people to *meretriculis* (prostitutes). Even clearer is the juxtaposition of the women Adam insults with the women he idealizes, for his complaint seems all the more severe considering that the objects were donated by the saintly Emma.

There are exceptions to Adam's anonymized and general depictions of immoral women, and these, too, point to yet other critical elements in his conceptual framework. In all these cases, he is employing female characters as exemplars, rather than being concerned with the description of a neutral or factual chain of events. He presents the regency of Empress Agnes, for example, as an evil to the Empire. This is not because of any misdeed of the empress, but because the Empire's *magnates*, who did not want to be commanded by her, seized the opportunity to revive old disputes over power in the realm. Agnes is unable to contain these disputes, which directly affected Hamburg–Bremen, and the consequences had a great impact on the *legatio* to the northern territories.[55] Queen Thore, the wife of Olaf Tryggvason from Norway, is said, in her pride, to

53 Adam of Bremen, ed. Tschan, 156. "Nam et cortes episcopi et decimae ecclesiarum, unde clerici, viduae et inopes sustentari deberent, omnia cesse-runt in usum laicorum, ita ut meretrices cum latronibus usque hodie luxurientur ex bonis ecclesiae, in derisu habentes episcopum omnesque ministros altaris." From Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 192 (bk. III, ch. 49).

54 See Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 189–90 (bk. III, ch. 46).

55 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 176 (bk. III, ch. 34).

have pressed him to instigate a war against Denmark.[56] Finally, Adam writes about King Sven Estridsen's wife,[57] who was supposed to be his blood relative, as well as his many concubines.[58] Because of their complicated relationship, Adam says, many problems had arisen in the kingdom of the Danes. Among these, the dispute between Sven and Archbishop Adalbert seems to be central to Adam, since it disrupted the work of the *legatio*. All these varied examples coalesce around issues of identity and ethics, and their connection to Adam of Bremen's ideals regarding the *legatio gentium*.

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As we can see in this chapter, ethics and identities are two central concepts in Adam's historiographical discourse. He uses them to present concrete examples of what he believes constitutes the ideal circumstances for the development of the *legatio gentium* and, thus, of his concept of history. Although these themes have already been extensively explored in recent scholarship, neither has been analyzed in connection with Adam's concept of history or in the context of his expectations toward the *legatio gentium*, both of which form the backbone of his text. The examples explored in this chapter demonstrate this connection and bring to light a further dimension of the complex interplay of possible meanings of the *Gesta Hammabusgnsis*, which surely broadens and enriches our knowledge of Adam of Bremen's historiographical concept.

56 "Olaph Thrucconis filius expulsus a Norwegia venit in Angliam ibique suscepit christianitatem, quam ipse primus in patriam revexit, duxitque uxorem a Dania, superbissimam Thore, cuius instinctu bellum Danis intulit" Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 98 (bk. II, ch. 36).

57 Probably Gunhild, mentioned above. In the *scholia* we find some confusion on this matter. *Scholium* 66 mentions Gude as Sven's wife, but bk. III, ch. 15 clearly states that Gunhild was divorced from the Danish king; and *scholium* 72 gives Gude as the Danish queen's name. Adam is very clear about Sven having multiple partners and this might be the source of the confusion in the *Gesta*. Cf. Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 157 (bk. III, ch. 16, Schol. 66); 164 (bk. III, ch. 21, Schol. 72).

58 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 152 (bk. III, ch. 12).

CONCLUSION

IN THE INTRODUCTION to this book, I indicated that its aim was to investigate Adam of Bremen's ideas concerning the Christianization of Europe's northern territories as articulated through his account in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. As I then stated, this approach is in many ways novel in its treatment of the text. When considering the impact his account has had on the modern understanding not only of the Christianization process but also of the pre-conversion Slavic and Scandinavian religious landscapes, one can recognize the importance of the results that this new approach enables. Two reflections were made as the starting points for this analysis. The first was that Adam's main objective was to explore the theme of the *legatio gentium*, emphasizing its origins and the vicissitudes it had suffered up to the current time. He did this not only as a memorializing undertaking, but also with the aim of reinvigorating it—in an ecclesiastical and political sense—at a time when, owing to Adalbert's disastrous rule, the archbishopric had experienced a very troubling period. The second reflection was that no matter how awkward or distorted Adam's narrative might appear to modern readers, the idea that he either simply did not want to understand complex cultural expressions or, even worse, deliberately manipulated his narrative, can never sufficiently explain why he wrote what he did in the way that he did. With these two premises in mind, my analysis looked for the conceptual elements that guided Adam's specific construction of history.

Let us return for a moment to the schematic illustration of the process through which a representation (in this case, a narrative) is formed (Figure 1). Here we see that experience, its perception, the selection of material, and the constraints of literary rules, all combine to mould this representation. In the chapters that followed, I tried, using different passages from the *Gesta*, to point to the influence of these elements in Adam's constructed narrative, keeping in mind that they result from his concepts or conceptions (as explained by Hans-Werner Goetz). I identified the complex interplay of these elements and how Adam stresses different aspects of the construction process at different times. For example, he closely follows the historiographical tradition to paint an image of the pagans in the north,[1] but justifies his short accounts of Hoger's and Reginward's rule over the archbishopric by stating there is a lack of surviving information.[2] On the other hand, he deliberately refrains from mentioning anything positive about Archbishop Hermann,[3] except that he facilitated singing and music during mass. The principles of choice, remembrance, and oblivion—choosing what to remember and what to forget—are perfectly clear in these passages. Even though there is no information on Hoger and Reginward, Adam still finds enough material to praise them. But of Hermann,

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1 See chapter 1.

2 On Hoger see above p. 67. Adam writes that he held his position for seven years (ed. Schmeidler, 51–52 (bk. I, ch. 53). Reginward was in office for less than a year and Adam states that no more than the archbishop's name is known to him (ed. Schmeidler, 54 (bk. I, ch. 53).

3 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 127–29 (bk. II, ch. 68).

who ruled shortly before Adam's arrival in Bremen, there were no deeds worthy of being remembered. Indeed, Adam ends the sole chapter dealing with Hermann's rule with a harsh comparison between him and the biblical high priest Eli. This last example shows how literary topoi, Adam's bias against Hermann, and his decisions to suppress material, all come together in a very negative narrative.

One of the key elements that can be identified when analyzing Adam's stance toward paganism is that he does not make any effort to define or to clarify his personal understanding of the concept. On the contrary, when he talks in any detail of the pre-conversion Saxons, Slavs and Swedes, he almost always resorts to well-established literary and theological topoi, which he further borrows—as is very clear in the case of the Saxons—from other writings that he considers to be authoritative. From the first depiction of paganism onward, Adam actually invites his readers to agree that all religious or cultural practices that could be considered close to those characteristics should be considered as pagan. Making use of motifs from Tacitus by way of Rudolf of Fulda, Adam suggests an opposition between Christian praxis, urban or monastic, and pagan practices, linked with nature-bound rituals and locations—or, as one might see it, with a wild religion opposed to civilized Christianity. The variations in the descriptions, as I have argued, do not represent a response to external influences, as would be the case, for example, for an ethnological account of cultural praxis. Despite his possible knowledge of variations in worship among the northern territories, it is clear that Adam was not interested in creating an anthropological or ethnographical report. He seeks rather to impress his readers with images of savagery and barbarism, for instance when, in writing about Uppsala, he mentions human sacrifice and indecent singing. On the other hand, he also clearly informs his readers that he does not intend to narrate anything or describe pagan practice for its own sake; rather, he does it in order to extol the *legatio gentium*, the archbishopric, and the advance of the Christian religion. In other words, the chronicler invites his readers to grasp why it is that he writes about paganism, and that this is intrinsically attached to the aims of the work as a whole. In this sense, any attempt to compare the *Gesta*'s information about northern paganism with other sources, especially those not literary in nature, and to conclude that Adam intentionally distorted his descriptions, is to misunderstand Adam's overall project. To accurately describe northern paganism was never Adam's main concern, and should not be read as such. On the contrary, it is only by dismissing the rival assertions of fiction versus fact, that the reader can arrive at the key question: "why did Adam write these descriptions?" And as simple as it might sound, he gives the answer himself when he states that they are explored to point out the successes of the *legatio*.

Since Adam constructs his entire narrative around this theme, understanding his idea of the *legatio gentium* was thus one of the central elements of this study. It was achieved in the first chapter through analysis of Adam's account of pagan religious practices, and also of his narrative of the beginnings of Christianization and its character as an ongoing enterprise to be led by the archbishopric until the end of time. Finally, we saw Adam's views on the *legatio* in relation to the ethics and identities involved in the spread of Christianity, and the resulting contact between the different ethnic and cultural groups brought together under Hamburg–Bremen's rule.

For Adam, *legatio* was in the first place intimately connected with the history of Hamburg in the sense that it was considered the power that moved the diocese's experience in time. This connection was established at the foundation of the diocese. Charlemagne's intention pointed in this direction, and the bestowing of the *legatio* upon Ansgar, along with his elevation to the position of bishop in Hamburg, sealed this link between the Christianization of the north and the institutional existence of the (arch) diocese. As I proposed in the second chapter, the notion of antiquity and primacy in the rights to Christianize and rule over the north was also thoroughly explored by Adam, who offers a quasi-mythical explanation for Ansgar's success where so many had failed before.[4] Adam builds further through the theme of ecclesiastical organization as an important characteristic attached to the *legatio gentium*, in pointing out the deeds of Ansgar's successors up to Unni, who resumed missionary activity by travelling to Denmark and Sweden. More than just Christianization through missionary preaching, the *legatio* is associated by Adam with the organization of the internal affairs of the Church in Bremen. This notion is expanded on in the second book of the *Gesta*, where it assumes a central aspect of the narrative. As I pointed out while discussing the depiction of Adalbert, the influence of the *Regula Pastoralis* and the *Liber Pontificalis* is especially striking here.

Finally, we come to an understanding of Adam's use of ethics and identity categories. As the last chapter of this book has shown, these elements not only point to Adam's ideas regarding the *Gesta*'s characters, but ultimately present his readers with the means to understand his idea of historical development. Drawing on the high medieval appropriation of the Augustinian–Orosian theology of history, he shows that the *legatio gentium* is ultimately connected with historical development itself. In this sense, the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* is not concerned solely with the deeds of the archbishops, but also reflects on the course of history from a universal perspective, explored using the narrative of northern Christianization as an exemplar.

In this sense then, the history of the archbishops of Hamburg–Bremen is presented as a history of the world. When the narrative is approached with a universal history of Orosian character in mind, one can identify interesting parallels. For a start, the diocese has a quasi-mythical founding courtesy of the ideal emperor Charlemagne, and the founding saint/missionary Ansgar. We have an allegorical expulsion from paradise, from the point at which Hamburg is destroyed up to the new beginning with the *legatio*. This is significantly marked by the martyrdom in Sweden of Archbishop Unni, in the territory where Christianization was first established by Ansgar. The following period, under the rule of the archbishops up to Adalbert, constitutes the history of the difficulties of the Christian community, with its ups and downs, menaced from without and within. It is the history of the *civitas permixta*, a theme explored by Otto of Freising half a century later. The narrative shows how the northern territories gradually became Christianized, but, at the same time, acknowledges that many unorthodox practices were allowed to live on amidst the Christian community. This is the reason that reform is needed. In this same period there is little certainty regarding the Christianity of the northern peoples.

4 Adam of Bremen, ed. Schmeidler, 20 and 22 (bk. I, ch. 15).

The Danes were Christians for a long time before they were truly converted under Harald Bluetooth (there seems to be some convergence between Adam and Widukind here); some say that Olaf Tryggvason was the first Christian king in Norway, while others say that he reverted to paganism. This uncertainty and divergence of opinion as to the religious status of many of the central characters shows those who should be acting like true Christians actually hindering the spread of the Christian faith and the cause of the *legatio*. This is because they lack true Christian virtue. The avarice of the Saxon nobles, for instance, prevents the Christianization of the Slavs.

And then there is Adam's contemporary crisis. His experiences living in Bremen seem to have been critical—they are certainly apparent in the way in which he presents his account of Adalbert's rule. Adam even seems to suggest that the catastrophic circumstances he found in Bremen by the time the archbishop died actually prompted him to write his account—to "reinvigorate the tired mother," as he explains. His analysis of Adalbert's tenure is thus based on two main themes: ethics and identities. These might be seen as rather modern elements, but they are fundamental to understanding the chronicler's account in the third book of the *Gesta*.

Adalbert represents a moral crisis for the archbishopric when he seeks to govern it while he himself is ruled by *cenodoxia* (vainglory), rather than the Christian virtues expected of a good ecclesiastical leader. But Adalbert also endangers the identity of the Hamburg–Bremen Church by engaging in the empire's affairs and neglecting his duty toward the archdiocese. His search for earthly grandeur precedes his fall, and is indeed an invitation to repent, as Adam explores by the end of the third book. However, this account should not be seen solely as the narrative of Adalbert's rule; it can also be understood as a mirror to the entire history of the archdiocese. It started well, with energy and virtue, and aims for the Christianization of the northern communities, but at some point it lost itself and began to dream of being great among the other dioceses. It even hoped to become a patriarchate under Adalbert, competing with Rome, as Adam suggests. Under Adalbert's flawed rule, the archdiocese, as Adam sees it, was on the verge of finally losing its identity, its connection to the *legatio gentium* and, therefore, its *raison d'être*. With the fourth book of the *Gesta*, therefore, comes the possibility of redemption. The narrative here appears not only as a guide for missionary activity in the north, but as a warning that the archbishopric must return to its former status through its care for the *legatio gentium*. It is here that Adam also develops his eschatological reflection on history. After the crisis embodied by Adalbert, the text points to the coming paradise, the ways of salvation, and the opportunity to be in God's presence in the eternal glory of the second Jerusalem. The fourth book guides readers to such an interpretation by associating the end of space with the end of time, and therefore, the end of history. Adam does not place this book at the close of the *Gesta* to function as an appendix for those interested in travelling to Scandinavia or the Baltic, but as his particular exegesis of the eschatological significance of the *legatio gentium* at the borders of the known world.

By analyzing Adam of Bremen's concepts and conceptions as presented to his readership over the course of his historiographical narrative, it becomes clear that the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* is not a simple—and biased—narrative aimed solely at the defence of Hamburg–Bremen's privileges over the ecclesiastical government in the northern ter-

ritories. It is instead a complex and multilayered construction. The historical account is thought to justify the diocese's past and discuss its present, but it is also directed toward the future—to the challenges the Christian community in Bremen would have to face if it intended to secure its ecclesiastical status. The findings that have emerged through my research reveal new possibilities for approaching Adam's work. Acknowledging that the *Gesta* is a reflection on history, besides being an account of the past experiences of the diocese, opens new dimensions to its exploration. The information that Adam sets down must be interpreted with the thought ever in mind of its impact within the overarching scheme of human salvation, and ultimately its place in the medieval theory of history. Neither biased propaganda nor an accurate account of affairs, the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* is the place where Adam's intellectual struggles with his own time unfold.

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